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Original Research

PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES OF LANDSLIDE DISASTER AMONG YOUTH AND ADULTS IN KATESH, HANANG DISTRICT, TANZANIA

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Abstract

Psychological and mental health issues related to disasters have affected youth and adults in the various communities worldwide. Efforts have been made to address psychological problems. However, there have been risks and challenges that have continued to expose the affected communities to psychological problems thus affecting their psychological wellbeing. The study examines psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and psychological wellbeing among youth and adults. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological design. The target populations were the youth and adults aged 15 years and above affected by land slide disaster in Katesh Ward. Thirty eight (38) informants were involved in the study. Non probability sampling techniques including convenience sampling and snow ball sampling techniques were used to select respondents. In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions were used to collect primary data and a review of various documents was used to collect secondary data from both written and electronic materials. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The major findings show that the respondents reported satisfaction with their psychological wellbeing in terms of personal growth, self-acceptance and environmental mastery. The findings show further that the perceived psychological outcomes among youth and adults included depression, constant fear, worry and inability to sleep. The study concludes that even though efforts have been made to address the outcomes of land slide disaster, psychological outcomes of land slide disaster are experienced among the affected community. The study recommends for the provision of psychological counselling services with a follow up. Also, programmes on mental health knowledge and awareness are recommended for youth and adults so as to address psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and the related psychosocial problems.

Keywords: Psychological wellbeing, psychological outcomes, youth, adults, Tanzania

Introduction

Psychological damage from life threatening events has a negative impact on the affected population. Psychological damage affects the brain functioning, mental health and well-being of an individual. Such a damage can cause feelings of isolation, anger, fear, sadness and loss. It also damages physical and mental health and affects the development of children and youth. Exposure to disaster can lead to lifelong impacts on behaviour, learning and physical and mental health (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies-INEE, 2018). Psychological symptoms such as emotional instability, stress retentions, and anxiety are experienced after traumatic experiences. Furthermore, depression, psychological abnormality, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are frequently encountered among communities after a disaster (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction-UNISDR, 2016). The trauma of witnessing landslides has mental health effects to the affected communities; hence, requiring sustained psychological support services.

People who encounter disasters tend to develop mental and physical illnesses. They also develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to different factors including physiological, economic and others. These factors affect cognitive and emotional functioning (Tol, et. al., 2023). Major symptoms of PTSD include first, recalling the trauma event and re-experiencing intrusion. The affected individuals also tend to have distressing dreams, flashbacks of the traumatic event and nightmares. Second, avoidance, where by the affected individuals tend to minimize stimuli that can cause re- experience. Three, hyper- arousal, which include difficulty in sleeping, irritability, aggressive and destructive behaviour and difficulty in concentration (Tol, et. al., 2023). Thus, traumatic events affect family relations, social cohesion, leading to negative psychological consequences. The provision of psychological and mental health support help victims to cope with trauma in their process of healing and in maintaining mental health and wellbeing (International Federation of Red Cross, 2022; Alloh, et. al., 2018).

The findings of this study are envisaged to inform and influence policy matters related to mental health and psychological wellbeing of individuals in the affected communities. The study will also generate useful insights on psychological outcomes of stressful life events experienced after the disaster and the place of mental health and psychological wellbeing of the affected individuals. This study therefore, sought to contribute to theoretical and practical knowledge on psychological outcomes related to disaster risks in communities. It also contributes knowledge and raises awareness on psychological outcomes and wellbeing of youth and adults exposed to disasters.

Statement of the Problem

Life threatening events including disasters have serious psychological effects among affected individuals. These events lead to negative emotions including feeling of isolation, anger, sadness and fear among the affected individuals; hence, affecting the quality of life leading to mental health problems among youth and adults in the community (Alloh, et. al., 2018). According to Tanzania Meteorological Authority (2023) landslides disaster is the most recent tragedy that hit

Manyara region and Hanang District in particular. The disaster destroyed houses and infrastructure and caused fear, traumatic experiences, negative emotions, confusion and depression among the affected communities (TMA, 2023). Efforts have been made to address psychological and mental health issues including the provision of psychological support services to the affected communities in Tanzania (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020). However, there have been risks and challenges individuals have been encountering in communities, thus, exposing them to mental health problems. Psychological and mental health problems have been reported to affect individuals in the affected communities (United Nations, 2019; Nyundo, 2020; Leon-Himmelstine, 2021). This study therefore examined psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and psychological wellbeing of youth and adults in Katesh in Hanang District. The study assumes that exposure to disaster challenges contributes to psychological problems that affect psychological wellbeing of youth and adults. This study findings are envisaged to contribute to the invaluable efforts of addressing psychological challenges thus ensuring psychological well-being of the youth and adults in the affected communities.

Study Objectives and Research Questions

The study aimed to examine psychological outcomes and wellbeing of youth and adults exposed to land slide disaster in Katesh, Hanang District, in Tanzania. Specifically, the study intended to:

- Assess perceived psychological wellbeing among youth and adults affected by the disaster.
- Determine perceived psychological outcomes of landslide disaster among the youth and adults.

Research Questions

- How do the youth and adults perceive their psychological wellbeing after land slide disaster?
- How do the youth and adults perceive psychological outcomes of landslide disaster?

Literature Review

This section presents a review of theoretical and empirical literature on psychological wellbeing and psychological outcomes of land slide disaster.

Theoretical Framework

This research study was guided by Psychoanalysis Theory, which originated from Sigmund Freud ideas in 1890s. The theory focusses mainly on the individual psyche, focusing on how the unconscious mind govern the conscious process in ways that interfere with healthy psychological functioning. Thus, the theory focusses on the conscious part of the mind which includes awareness of events, thoughts and feeling that can be remembered. It also focusses on unconscious part of the mind which includes thoughts and feelings, which are not accessible to an individual's conscious or subconscious mind (Pick, 2015; Gaztambide, 2021).

The theory posits that mental health problems that increase in adult life often originate in early life experience. Likewise, the theory considers individual's current social context and their interactions with the immediate environment as instrumental in their mental status in adulthood. Thus, the theory assumes the following; first, the existence of conscious drive and defence mechanisms. Second, unconsciousness has an impact on human personality and behaviour.

Third, our earliest experiences are important in shaping later relational patterns, and fourth, internal factors have an impact on people behaviour. Hence, behaviour is not in a client complete control (Pick, 2015; Flosh, 2016). This study therefore, used Freud's theory to examine mental health along with individual external behaviour. The theory guided the study in the assessment of perceived psychological outcomes of disaster among the youth and adults. The theory also guided the study in explaining the perceived psychological wellbeing of individual following the disaster.

Psychological Well Being

Psychological well-being includes mental and emotional health, involving the ability to form relationships, resilience, and being positive in actions and emotions (Huppert, 2009). Wellbeing consists of three elements that involve cognitive evaluation of individual satisfaction with life including positive affect and low levels of negative affect. Wellbeing focusses on how individuals feel and function in various areas such as emotional, cognitive, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing (Huppert, 2009).

Furthermore, psychological well-being is determined by six factors: Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, self- acceptance, and purpose in life (Riff, 2014). Figure 1 shows the determinants of Psychological well-being.

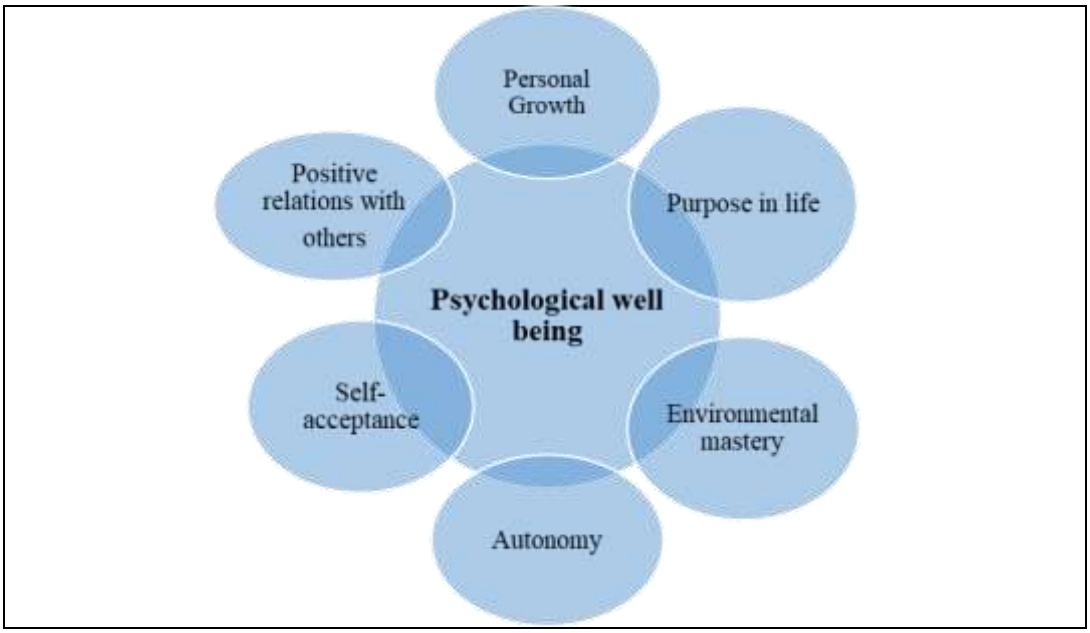

Figure 1. Determinants of Psychological Well-being.

Source: Modified from Ryff (2014). Psychological Well-being Revisited; Advances in Science and Practice. *Psychother Psychosom.* 83(1), 10-28. https://doi:10.1159/000353263

Figure 1 shows that psychological well-being is determined by the way individuals feel about their life including the meaning, direction and the purpose of their life. It (psychological well-being) is also determined by autonomy where one can live based on their own convictions (Ryff, 2014). In addition, psychological wellbeing is determined by individual's ability to make use of personal talents and potentials for personal growth. Likewise, it (psychological well-being) is also determined by one's ability to manage well life situations and their environment. Another factor is self- acceptance, which involves acknowledgement of one self and awareness of personal limitations (Ryff, 2014).

Psychological Outcomes after Tragic Events

Tragic events including disasters disrupt the functioning of a community or society leading to losses of human lives, material, economic or environmental destructions, which exceed the ability of the affected community to cope using their own resources (IASC, 2007). Witnessing the landslide has traumatic effect with psychological outcomes to the affected communities. Survivors of land slide disaster tend to experience anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These psychological problems may be pre-existing but the disaster can induce such problems. Thus, they require psychological support to enable the affected communities cope with the effects of the disaster (Ni, et. al., 2025).

Psychological recovery involves positive adaption to a changed reality, but this involves significant ongoing issues that require professional attention. The destruction of the natural environment and resources can lead to grief (Guilaran et. al., 2018). It is argued that individuals with skills in problem solving and emotional regulation are less likely to experience long-term negative impacts. They may have the ability to establish routines and a sense of stability. Likewise, when psychological support is provided the affected people become protected from negative psychosocial effects including frustration, anger and sadness. In addition, the provision of mental health guidance, resources and support can help such individuals to address psychological challenges. Post disaster compensations can help to address the losses including material repair, without affecting communities (Guilaran et. al., 2018).

Methodology

This section presents the methodology that guided the study. The section begins by presenting the study area, followed by design of the study and study population, then sample size and sampling procedures, methods of data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Each of these aspects is explained in the succeeding subsections.

The Study Area

This study was conducted in Katesh Ward in Hanang District in Manyara region. According to Tanzania Meteorological Authority (2023), landslides disaster was the most current tragedy that hit Manyara region and Hanang District in particular. People were injured, and more than 65 people died and scores of houses and infrastructure were destroyed (TMA, 2023). The population in Hanang District is 367, 391; among these, 188,063 are males and 179,328 are females. The district has 69,710 households, with an average household size of 5.3 (URT, 2022). Moreover, the population in Katesh Ward is 13,084; among these 6,332 are males and 6,752 are females. The average household size is 3.7 (URT, 2022). Hanang District was purposively selected in this study because of the landslides disaster which was experienced in the area.

Design of the Study and Study Population

The study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive phenomenological design to investigate perceived psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and psychological wellbeing of youth and adults. The target population for this research was youth and adults aged 15 years and above from the families affected by the land slide disaster. Others include social workers involved in the provision of psychological services to the affected individuals in Katesh Ward. Psychological services provided by social workers include counselling and referrals for mental health care services. Thirty two (32) youth and adults and six (06) social workers participated in the study. The inclusion criteria included being 15 years and above and affected by land slide disaster and being a social worker.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

A sample of 38 respondents was selected from the population of youth and adults in Katesh Ward. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents based on their accessibility. Snow ball sampling technique was used to obtain youth and adults with similar characteristics and experiences as recommended and be referred to by other respondents. Through this techniques, 16 youth and 16 adults who were affected by the land slide disaster and 6 social workers who assisted in the disaster were conveniently selected to participate in the study. Participant consent, anonymity and privacy of data were sought before participation in the study.

Methods of Data Collection

Different methods were used to collect data from the respondents. First, thirty two (32) in-depth interviews were conducted to youth and adults in the affected families. Also, six in-depth interviews were conducted to social workers. Second, two Focused Group Discussions were conducted to youth and adults. Interviews and discussions were conducted in Kiswahili language and then they were later translated in English to ensure clear understanding of the questions. Informed consent was sought before data collection. Interviews and FGDs took place in September 2024. Data collection was stopped after attaining data saturation where the

respondents repeated same ideas (Saunders et. al., 2018). Third, various documents from both written and electronic materials such as policy documents and Government publications were reviewed. This method provided useful and relevant information.

Data Analysis

Interview data were transcribed and summarized according to key themes based on the objectives of the study. Data were coded from keywords obtained from interview extracts and audio recordings. Audio recordings of interview helped to capture the context of the information provided. Themes were identified and analysed using thematic analysis, which involved six phases; familiarization with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and creating a narrative using extracts from the interview and passages showing the analytic narrative. Thematic analysis was carried out to identify patterns from the data and to derive themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, frequencies and percentage were presented in bar charts and graphs.

Ethical Considerations

The research clearance was obtained from The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy to conduct the study in Katesh, Hanang District, Manyara. The research was registered at the Directorate of Research and Consultancy and was reviewed by the Ethical Committee. Researchers ensured confidentiality, and obtain consent from the respondents by informing them the purpose of the study and asked them for voluntary participation. The researchers ensured that the whole process of data collection was done in a conducive environment and where confidentiality was observed.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the study findings, based on the study objectives and the research questions that guided the study. The section begin with findings on perceived psychological wellbeing among youth and adults affected by disaster, followed by perceived psychological outcomes of landslide disaster among youth and adults. Similar themes are used in the discussion of findings.

Findings

Perceived Psychological Wellbeing among Youth and Adults Affected by Disaster

The first research question sought to examine perceived psychological wellbeing among youth and adults affected by landslide disaster. Table 1 gives the details.

Table 1: Perceived Psychological Wellbeing among Youth and Adults

Data Items	Codes	Category	Sub theme	Themes
I feel confident and positive about myself	Being positive in actions	Self-acceptance	Psychological Wellbeing	Perceived Psychological well-being of youth and adults
I feel good about myself				
I am satisfied with the support given to us	Individual satisfaction			
I keep on trying to cope and to make improvements in life.	Resilience	Personal growth		
We learnt from the tragic event and life has to continue.				
We accepted the new situations and we were ready to adjust with the changes	Autonomy	Environmental mastery		

The findings in Table 1 showed the perceived psychological well-being of the respondents in terms of self-acceptance, personal growth and environmental mastery after experiencing the tragic event. The following sub sections gives further details.

Self- Acceptance and Personal Growth

The findings showed how the respondents feel about themselves and how their life continued after land slide disaster. The respondents reported on self-confidence, positive feeling about themselves and the changes that were experienced. A 21 years old youth had this to say:

> *My family encountered a difficult situation when our house was destroyed by land slide. We received adequate assistance, I am satisfied with the support given to us. We are going on with our daily activities. I feel confident and positive about myself (11 September, 2024).*

These findings show that despite the effects of the disaster, the affected individuals managed to accept what had happened, adjust and continue well with their daily activities. This suggest that there were good mechanisms employed to ensure provision of psychological support. Furthermore, the findings showed respondents' satisfaction and acknowledgement of the improvement in their life despite the tragic experience that they encountered. The finding suggest further that the respondents' psychological wellbeing was satisfactory.

Environmental Mastery

The findings suggest that the victims of the tragic event managed to cope with the new environment after the tragic event. This included a shift to temporary areas for accommodation and reallocation to new areas and houses which were built for the victims. A female aged 49 years had this to say:

> *I managed to adjust to the changes and cope with the environment. This helped me a lot to settle down and to accept what had happened. The prompt support that was given to us contributed to quick adjustment…(11 September, 2024).*

The findings show that respondents acknowledged their ability to adjust to the environment after the tragic event.

Perceived Psychological Outcomes of Landslide Disaster among Youth and Adults

Youth and adults were asked about their perceived psychological outcomes of landslide disaster. The findings show that there were youth and adults' respondents who experienced anxiety, stress and depression. Table 2 gives the details.

Table 2: Perceived Psychological Outcomes of Landslide Disaster

Data Items	Codes	Category	Sub themes	Theme
I am not feeling well since we encountered the tragic problem. I am worried about my future People left their plots. They believe that the tragic event may reoccur in the future. I lost members of my family.	Traumatic effects	Anxiety Stress Depression Grief	Psychological Outcomes after tragic events	Perceived Psychological Outcomes of landslide disaster

Traumatic Effects

The findings showed that the respondents reported Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms including inability to sleep and constant fear and worry. These conditions affected them psychologically as this 47 years old female adult reported:

I lost everything in that tragic, I had to start afresh and I am not feeling well since we encountered the tragic problem. It disturbed everything, I cannot sleep well, I am worried about my future. I feel that life is not promising...(11 September, 2024).

These findings show that the disaster had serious psychological damaging effect to the respondents. The findings also revealed the occurrence of family separations, which left serious pain and grief among families. The loss of family structure, safety and control led to serious emotional effects including the feeling of helplessness, fear, grief and uncertainty as this 45 years old male adult said:

I lost members of my family…. I am confused, life is too tough for me. I don't know how I can manage this situation. We tried to rescue ourselves but the floods were so strong. I managed to survive but I have not seen my wife and children so far (11 September, 2024).

These findings show that the respondents experienced psychological effects and the feelings of pain and grief for the loss of family members and relatives. The findings show further that the respondents suffered from the destruction of their properties, and that they were worried they may succumb to a similar experience in the future. A male Youth aged 26 years old had this to say:

There are individuals who are afraid of going back to their land areas. People left their plots, they no longer want to build houses in such areas. They believe that the tragic event may reoccur in the future. There are large stones and big trees in these plots, and which were left out behind following the landslide floods (11 September, 2024).

The findings suggest that disaster led to psychological outcomes that affected coping ability of the affected individuals. These lead to worries and fear. Furthermore, others individuals required further attention as reported by the female social worker aged 38 years.

We provided psychological services to the victims and we provided referrals for further assistance particularly for clients who required further support including medication and specialist observations (12 September, 2024).

Discussion

Perceived Psychological Wellbeing Among Youth and Adults Affected by Disaster.

The findings obtained through in depth interviews and FGD's suggest that the respondents experienced psychological distress that affected their psychological wellbeing. These included emotional, cognitive and behavioural effects experienced during the disaster. For example, the respondents reported to have been gripped with fear as they perceived the disaster as a life-threatening event. In addition, the respondents were filled with anxiety leading to emotional instability. This led to psychological symptoms such as irrational fear, restlessness, sleep disorder and difficulty in concentration. It is argued that psychological problems such as depression and anxiety disorders, PTSD are experienced after experiencing a disaster. These

conditions become severe due to property damage and financial problems (Lee, et. al., 2020; Brooks et al 2017).

The findings suggest that despite the psychosocial related problems encountered during the land slide disaster, some of the respondents had a stable state of psychological wellbeing in terms of personal growth, self-acceptance and environmental mastery. Moreover, the respondents indicated to have been satisfied with their psychological wellbeing. Satisfaction in psychological wellbeing help individuals to build resilience and coping mechanisms for the psychosocial related problems experienced during and after the disaster. Psychological wellbeing helps in realising ones' potential to achieve a meaningful and fulfilling life (INEE, 2028). The findings showed further that individuals' ability to cope with the changes helped in adjustment and psychological well-being. Other scholars argued further that environmental mastery involves choosing or creating environment suitable to individuals' psychic conditions (Nezlek, et al., 2025).

Perceived Psychological Outcomes of Landslide Disaster Among Youth and Adults.

The findings suggest that there were youth and adults who experienced anxiety, worries about the future thus, leading to inability to sleep well. Scholars argue that sleep disorder, poor memory, confusion, difficulty in concentration are commonly evident following traumatic experiences (Lowe et. al., 2020). These symptoms affect the quality of life as they interfere with daily functioning of individuals.

Thus, the loss of people's lives and resources has the potential of causing long-term psychological distress. This has an implication on psychological wellbeing of an individual. It is argued that continuous exposure of individuals to traumatic events contribute to the weakening of their psychological resilience. This can lead to a more serious psychosocial disturbance that need the attention of professionals and experts. It is argued further that people tend to react naturally when they experience sadness and grief. However, the provision of psychological and community support immediately after the disaster can reduce the severity of psychological problems (Yeo, et. al., 2015). In addition, positive attitudes, thoughts and feelings about oneself and one's life can determine good psychological well-being (Moore & Shell, 2017). The findings suggest further that the disaster led to psychological outcomes that affected the coping ability of the affected individuals in Katesh Ward. As argued by scholars, having fear of the recurrence of a disaster is common among individuals who experience stress. Such individuals tend to show symptoms such as panic attacks and anxiety (Schemitsch & Nauth, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study aimed to examine the perceived psychological wellbeing and psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and among youth and adults. The study firstly assessed the perceived psychological wellbeing of youth and adults after occurrence of land slide disaster. The study findings show that youth and adult affected by the land slide perceived to be satisfied with their

psychological wellbeing in terms of their personal growth, self-acceptance and environmental mastery. Satisfaction in psychological wellbeing helped youth and adults to build resilience and coping mechanisms for the psychological related problems experienced during and after the disaster.

Secondly, the study assessed the perceived psychological outcomes of land slide disaster among youth and adults. The study concludes that even though efforts have been made to address the outcomes of land slide disaster, psychological outcomes of land slide disaster were frequent among the affected community at Katesh Ward in Hanang District. The study findings show that the perceived psychological outcomes reported among youth and adults included Post-Traumatic Stress and Depression. Their symptoms were characterised by inability to sleep, constant fear and worry. Others included pain and grief attributed by destruction of properties, family separations and injuries. The study also showed the reported negative emotional reactions including fear and sadness and feelings of helplessness and restlessness. The present study contribute to knowledge by providing insights for further studies on the psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and psychological wellbeing of youth and adults. The study also identified areas that required interventions to address psychological outcomes of land slide disaster among the affected individuals in the communities.

Recommendations

The study calls for psychological and mental health services that help to address psychological outcomes of disaster and to curb the potential to cause the long-term effects. Firstly, the study recommends for provision of training on stress management and coping skills among affected youth and adults. This help to ensure good psychological wellbeing. Secondly, programmes on knowledge and awareness on psychological wellbeing are recommended for youth and adults. These will help to address psychological outcomes of land slide disaster and the related psychosocial problems. Thirdly, the study recommends for provision of psychological counselling services with continues follow up so as to address emotional outcomes such as fear, anxiety and stress.

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