

School Counseling Services and Students' Psychological Recovery After the 2025 Hydrometeorological Disaster in Central Aceh

Husrin Konadi, Hernita, Riyan Pujiono
IAIN Takengon, Aceh, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Hydrometeorological disasters frequently affect vulnerable communities in Indonesia and often result in significant psychological consequences for children and adolescents. This study aimed to examine the psychological impacts experienced by students following the 2025 hydrometeorological disaster in Central Aceh, analyze the role of school counseling services in supporting students' recovery, and identify challenges in the implementation of post-disaster counseling interventions. The study employed a qualitative case study design involving 25 disaster-affected students, 12 school counselors, and 10 subject teachers from several elementary and secondary schools in Central Aceh. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that students experienced various psychological difficulties, including anxiety, recurring fear, concentration problems, sleep disturbances, and decreased learning motivation. School counseling services, implemented through individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, and trauma-healing activities, played a significant role in facilitating students' psychological recovery and strengthening their resilience. However, the effectiveness of these services was constrained by limited numbers of counselors, insufficient trauma-related training, inadequate facilities, and restricted service time. The study concludes that school counseling services constitute an essential component of post-disaster recovery and should be strengthened through enhanced professional capacity, integrated psychosocial support programs, and collaboration among schools, local governments, and mental health stakeholders. The findings contribute to the development of disaster-responsive counseling practices and school-based psychosocial support systems in disaster-prone regions.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received :1 March 2026
Accepted :06 May 2026

KEYWORDS

Hydrometeorological Disaster; School Counseling Services; Psychosocial Support; Trauma Recovery; Student Resilience; Mental Health.

* **Corresponding Author:** husrin.konadi92@gmail.com

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Era Scientific Publisher (ERA).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Introduction

Hydrometeorological disasters, including flash floods, landslides, extreme rainfall, and severe storms, are among the most frequent natural hazards affecting Indonesia. Due to its mountainous topography and climatic characteristics, Central Aceh is particularly vulnerable to such disasters. The hydrometeorological disaster that struck Central Aceh between 24 and 26 November 2025 resulted in extensive infrastructure damage, economic losses, and social disruption. Beyond these physical consequences, the disaster also generated significant psychological impacts, particularly among students, who represent one of the most vulnerable populations during and after disaster events. Students who directly experienced the disaster frequently exhibited symptoms such as anxiety, recurring fear, sleep disturbances, hypervigilance, reduced motivation, and decreased participation in school activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that disaster exposure may negatively affect children's emotional well-being, academic engagement, and psychosocial development if appropriate interventions are not provided.

If left unaddressed, these psychological reactions may develop into more severe conditions, including prolonged trauma, emotional disorders, and difficulties in social adjustment. According to trauma theory, exposure to highly stressful and threatening events can disrupt an individual's sense of safety, emotional stability, and capacity to function effectively in daily life. For school-aged children and adolescents, psychological distress following disasters may interfere with academic performance, peer relationships, and overall developmental outcomes. Consequently, post-disaster recovery efforts should extend beyond physical reconstruction and incorporate comprehensive psychosocial support aimed at restoring students' emotional well-being and educational functioning.

Schools play a crucial role in supporting students' psychological recovery following disaster events. As one of the primary social environments in children's lives, schools provide continuity, stability, and opportunities for psychosocial intervention during the recovery process. Within this

context, school counseling services constitute an essential component of educational support systems.

Counseling services are designed to assist students in achieving optimal personal, social, academic, and emotional development. Following disasters, school counselors can provide emotional support, facilitate trauma recovery, strengthen coping skills, and help students regain a sense of security and self-confidence. Through individual counseling, group counseling, psychoeducational activities, and trauma-healing interventions involving play, art, and social interaction, students can gradually process their traumatic experiences and rebuild psychological resilience. Resilience theory further suggests that supportive environments and positive interpersonal relationships play a critical role in helping children adapt and recover following adverse experiences.

Despite their importance, the implementation of school counseling services in disaster-affected areas often faces significant challenges. Limited numbers of trained counselors, insufficient professional preparation in trauma-informed practices, inadequate facilities, and the absence of comprehensive psychosocial support programs frequently hinder the effectiveness of counseling interventions. Furthermore, many schools lack integrated mental health and psychosocial support frameworks within their educational systems, resulting in fragmented and short-term responses to students' psychological needs. These conditions reveal a substantial gap between the psychological support required by disaster-affected students and the services available within schools.

Previous studies have consistently highlighted the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions, trauma healing programs, social support, and counseling services in reducing post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and emotional distress among disaster survivors. However, most existing studies have focused on general psychological recovery programs or community-based interventions. Limited research has specifically examined how school counseling services are implemented within educational settings to support students' post-disaster recovery. Moreover, empirical evidence remains scarce regarding counseling practices in mountainous disaster-prone regions such as Central Aceh, where geographical, cultural, and institutional characteristics may influence both students' psychological responses and the effectiveness of support services.

The novelty of this study lies in its examination of school counseling services as a structured mechanism for addressing the psychological impacts of hydrometeorological disasters among elementary and secondary school students in Central Aceh. Unlike previous studies that primarily investigate disaster survivors from a broader psychosocial perspective, this research focuses specifically on students' psychological conditions, the implementation of counseling interventions within schools, and the challenges faced by counselors in supporting recovery efforts. By situating the study within a mountainous disaster-prone region, this research provides context-specific insights into the role of school counseling services in promoting resilience, psychological recovery, and educational continuity following disaster events.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to: (1) identify the psychological impacts experienced by students following the 2025 hydrometeorological disaster in Central Aceh; (2) analyze the role of school counseling services in supporting students' psychological recovery; and (3) examine challenges and potential strategies for optimizing counseling services to provide more effective and sustainable support for students' mental health and educational development in post-disaster contexts. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of school-based psychosocial support models and disaster-responsive counseling services in disaster-prone regions.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the psychological conditions of students affected by hydrometeorological disasters and the role of school counseling services in supporting their post-disaster recovery. A case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of participants' experiences, perceptions, and responses within their real-life contexts. The study focused on understanding how students experienced the psychological consequences of disaster events and how counseling interventions were implemented in affected schools.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted between January and March 2026 in several elementary and secondary schools affected by hydrometeorological disasters in Central Aceh, Indonesia. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that those involved possessed relevant experiences and information related to the research objectives.

The participants consisted of 25 students who had been directly affected by the disasters, 12 school counselors, and 10 subject teachers. Student participants were selected based on their direct exposure to disaster impacts, including displacement, property loss, disruption of schooling, or psychological distress following the disaster. School counselors were included because they were actively involved in providing counseling and psychosocial support services, while subject teachers were selected due to their daily interactions with affected students and their observations of students' behavioral and emotional changes in the classroom.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' psychological experiences, emotional responses, coping strategies, and perceptions of the counseling services they received. Interviews with school counselors and teachers focused on identifying students' psychological needs, counseling interventions, and challenges encountered during post-disaster recovery efforts.

Non-participant observations were conducted during counseling sessions and school activities to examine the implementation of counseling services, student participation, behavioral responses, and interactions between students and counselors. Field notes were recorded systematically throughout the observation process.

Secondary data were obtained from school records, counseling service reports, psychosocial intervention documentation, and relevant literature concerning disaster recovery and school counseling. These documents were used to provide contextual information and support the interpretation of primary data.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data condensation stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were reviewed, coded, and organized according to the research focus. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of thematic narratives and descriptive matrices to facilitate pattern identification and interpretation.

The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions through continuous comparison across data sources. Emerging themes related to students' psychological conditions, coping mechanisms, counseling interventions, and post-disaster recovery processes were refined and interpreted to answer the research questions comprehensively.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. In addition, member checking was conducted by sharing summaries of interview findings with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of the researchers' interpretations. Peer debriefing was also undertaken with fellow researchers and counseling education experts to reduce potential researcher bias and strengthen analytical rigor.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the participating schools and relevant educational authorities. Written informed consent was secured from teachers and school counselors, while parental or guardian consent was obtained for student participants. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, their right to withdraw at any stage, and the confidentiality of the information provided. To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings, and all data were stored securely throughout the research process.

Result and Discussion

Results

Psychological Impacts Experienced by Students Following the Disaster

The findings revealed that students affected by the 2025 hydrometeorological disaster in Central Aceh experienced various psychological difficulties during the post-disaster period. Interviews and observations indicated that anxiety, recurring fear, concentration difficulties, decreased learning motivation, and sleep disturbances were among the most frequently reported reactions. Many students expressed concerns about the possibility of future disasters, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall. Several participants reported difficulties concentrating during classroom activities, while others demonstrated reduced participation in learning and social interactions.

Observational data further revealed noticeable behavioral changes among affected students. Many students appeared quieter than usual, were easily startled by sudden sounds, and demonstrated reluctance to discuss their disaster experiences. Teachers also reported reduced classroom engagement and lower academic participation among several students during the early stages of recovery.

The Role of School Counseling Services

The findings indicate that school counseling services played a significant role in supporting students' psychological recovery following the disaster. Counseling interventions included individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance activities, and trauma-healing programs utilizing games, art-based activities, and social interaction exercises.

Individual counseling was primarily provided to students exhibiting more severe emotional distress, while group counseling created opportunities for students to share experiences and receive peer support. Trauma-healing activities encouraged students to express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment. Classroom guidance sessions also contributed to restoring students' learning motivation and engagement.

Changes in Students' Psychological and Educational Functioning

Interviews with teachers and counselors suggested gradual improvements in students' emotional and behavioral conditions following participation in counseling activities. Students became more willing to engage in classroom discussions, interact with peers, and participate in extracurricular activities. Several students reported feeling calmer and more confident in returning to their daily routines.

Challenges in Counseling Service Implementation

Despite the positive outcomes, several implementation challenges were identified. These included the limited number of school counselors, insufficient training in trauma-informed counseling practices, inadequate counseling facilities, and time constraints caused by academic scheduling. Such limitations reduced the frequency and intensity of counseling interventions provided to students.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that hydrometeorological disasters have substantial psychological consequences for school-aged children. Anxiety, fear, concentration difficulties, and reduced learning motivation emerged as dominant responses among students affected by the disaster. These findings are consistent with Trauma Theory, which suggests that exposure to life-threatening events may disrupt individuals' emotional stability and sense of safety, resulting in psychological distress and behavioral changes (Herman, 1992). Similar findings have been reported in previous studies examining the mental health consequences of natural disasters among children and adolescents.

The study further highlights the important role of school counseling services in facilitating students' psychological recovery. Through individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, and trauma-healing activities, students were provided with opportunities to process their experiences, express emotions, and develop coping strategies. These findings support counseling theories emphasizing the importance of therapeutic relationships, emotional support, and psychological safety in promoting recovery following traumatic events (Corey, 2013).

From the perspective of Resilience Theory, the improvements observed among students indicate that supportive educational environments can function as protective factors during post-disaster recovery. Masten (2014) argues that resilience develops through positive relationships, access to supportive resources, and opportunities for adaptive coping. In this study, counseling services served as mechanisms that strengthened students' resilience by fostering emotional regulation, self-confidence, and social connectedness.

The findings also align with the Comprehensive School Counseling Model, which emphasizes the role of counseling services in addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and career development needs. In post-disaster contexts, counseling services extend beyond traditional educational functions by providing psychosocial support and facilitating students' reintegration into school life.

However, the study identified several barriers that may reduce the effectiveness of counseling interventions. The shortage of trained counselors, limited trauma-related competencies, inadequate facilities, and restricted service time indicate the need for greater institutional support. These challenges suggest that post-disaster counseling programs should be supported through specialized professional development, enhanced resource allocation, and stronger collaboration among schools, mental health professionals, local governments, and higher education institutions.

A notable contribution of this study is its focus on the implementation of school counseling services in a mountainous disaster-prone region of Central Aceh. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine general psychosocial interventions, this research provides context-specific evidence regarding how counseling services support students' psychological recovery within educational settings. The findings therefore contribute to the development of disaster-responsive counseling models that are sensitive to local educational, social, and cultural contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that school counseling services constitute an essential component of post-disaster recovery efforts. Strengthening counseling capacity, integrating psychosocial support into school systems, and establishing sustainable intervention programs may not only support students' recovery after disasters but also enhance their resilience in facing future adversities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that hydrometeorological disasters have significant psychological consequences for students in Central Aceh. The findings revealed that students experienced various forms of psychological distress, including anxiety, recurring fear, concentration difficulties, sleep disturbances, and decreased learning motivation following the 2025 disaster. These psychological reactions affected not only students' emotional well-being but also their participation in academic and social activities within the school environment.

The study further demonstrates that school counseling services play a crucial role in supporting students' post-disaster psychological recovery. Through individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance activities, and trauma-healing interventions, counseling services provided emotional support, facilitated the expression of traumatic experiences, and assisted students in developing adaptive coping strategies. The findings indicate that students who participated in counseling programs showed gradual improvements in emotional regulation, self-confidence, classroom engagement, and social interaction.

Despite these positive outcomes, the implementation of counseling services was constrained by several challenges, including the limited number of school counselors, insufficient training in trauma-informed counseling, inadequate counseling facilities, and restricted service time within school schedules. These limitations highlight the need for stronger institutional support and greater investment in school-based psychosocial services.

This study emphasizes that effective post-disaster recovery should not focus solely on physical reconstruction but must also prioritize students' psychological well-being. Strengthening counselors' competencies, integrating psychosocial support into school programs, and enhancing collaboration among schools, local governments, mental health professionals, and higher education institutions are essential for improving the quality and sustainability of post-disaster interventions. Ultimately, school counseling services should be positioned not only as remedial interventions

following disasters but also as preventive and developmental mechanisms that enhance students' resilience and preparedness for future adversities.

This study was limited to a specific geographical area and involved participants from selected schools affected by the disaster in Central Aceh. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all disaster-affected regions. Future studies are recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, examine the long-term psychological impacts of disasters on students, and evaluate the effectiveness of specific counseling interventions using longitudinal or mixed-method research designs. Such research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of school-based psychosocial support and disaster-responsive counseling practices.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this study. Special appreciation is extended to the participating schools in Central Aceh for granting permission and providing valuable support throughout the research process.

The authors are particularly grateful to the school counselors, subject teachers, and students who generously shared their experiences, perspectives, and insights as participants in this study. Their cooperation and willingness to contribute valuable information were essential to the achievement of the research objectives.

The authors also wish to thank all parties who provided support, assistance, and encouragement, both directly and indirectly, during the conduct of this research. Their contributions played a significant role in the completion of this study.

References

- Ager, A., & Metzler, J. (2017). Child friendly spaces: A structured review of the current evidence-base. *Disasters*, 41(2), 300–322. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12215>
- Baker, J. A. (2006). Contributions of teacher–child relationships to positive school adjustment during elementary school. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(3), 211–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.02.002>
- Betancourt, T. S., & Khan, K. T. (2008). The mental health of children affected by armed conflict. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(3), 229–247. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01863.x>
- Corey, G. (2013). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Jaycox, L. H., Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A. P., Walker, D. W., Langley, A. K., Gegenheimer, K. L., & Scott, M. (2010). Children's mental health care following Hurricane Katrina: A field trial of trauma-focused psychotherapies. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23(2), 223–231. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20518>
- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2016). *Panduan operasional penyelenggaraan bimbingan dan konseling*. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.
- Latipun. (2015). *Psikologi konseling*. Malang: UMM Press.
- Masten, A. S. (2014). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development*, 85(1), 6–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12205>
- Nastasi, B. K., & Jayasena, A. (2014). School-based mental health services in international contexts. *School Psychology International*, 35(5), 442–459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034314533604>
- Prayitno, & Amti, E. (2013). *Dasar-dasar bimbingan dan konseling*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Purgato, M., Gross, A. L., Betancourt, T., Bolton, P., Bonetto, C., Gastaldon, C., ... Barbui, C. (2018). Focused psychosocial interventions for children in low-resource settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLOS Medicine*, 15(8), e1002714. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002714>
- Sari, D., & Rahman, A. (2020). Peran layanan bimbingan dan konseling dalam penanganan trauma siswa pascabencana. *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 7(2), 120–130.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2017). *Metode penelitian pendidikan*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.

- UNICEF. (2018). *Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings*. New York: UNICEF.
- World Health Organization. (2013). *Building back better: Sustainable mental health care after emergencies*. Geneva: WHO.