

# **Battling Nature's Fury: Struggles in Overcoming Natural Disasters, Coping Mechanisms, and Insights of People Living in Mining Sites**

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## **Abstract**

**Disaster preparedness and response to natural disasters is pressing. This study explores the case of mining disaster survivors. Using qualitative design, involving 12 survivors, I obtained the information by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions supported with pertinent documents. I found that the lack of disaster preparedness left the locals caught off guard and succumb with fear and anxiety, felt disoriented, witnessed the loss of lives, distressed by the unforeseen catastrophe, and lost homes and livelihoods. Despite this, the community showed resilience through faith and embraced gratitude and positivity, received psychological support and fostered mental resilience, recognized the valuable aid of government and support agencies. Survivors learned that obeying warnings and deeper sensitivity to the surroundings and preparing for possible eventuality saved lives. Strengthening disaster preparedness plans, early warning systems, local government involvement, and psychological added to material supports are recommended.**

**Keywords: Struggles, Natural Disasters, Coping Mechanisms, Insights of People Living in Mining Sites**

## **Introduction**

Lack of disaster preparedness and response to natural disasters had been a critical global issue (Ardiansyah et al., 2024). Lack of preparedness and response was an issue faced among individuals in disaster-prone areas, many people are unaware of how to prepare for emergencies, which exacerbates the impact of disasters (Totare et al., 2024). Lack of disaster preparedness and response in low- and middle-income countries was also a significant problem, particularly regarding rehabilitation services (Gosling et al., 2024).

In Nigeria, lack of disaster preparedness is a significant problem (Eneh et al., 2024). In Myanmar, lack of disaster preparedness and response at the household level remained a critical problem (Heinkel et al., 2022). In China, lack of disaster preparedness and response among nurses was a great problem, indicating that training and educational status significantly influenced disaster response capabilities among nursing professionals (Ying et al., 2023). In the USA, healthcare organizations' experiences the problem of lack of disaster preparedness and response in facing hurricanes disaster the Irma and Maria

(Noboa-Ramos et al., 2023).

In the Philippines, the lack of disaster preparedness and response was indicated by the absence of comprehensive disaster plans and response teams in academic institutions (Orenia&Cabonero, 2023). Complicated preparedness problems are indicated by the absence of evacuation rooms in schools (Manliguez et al., 2023). Indeed, the flood victims lack of effective response to flood disasters (Kurata et al., 2023) have nowhere to evacuate. This problem calls for public awareness and insufficient training for emergency responders led to inadequate disaster response, resulting in prolonged recovery periods (Gaudiel, 2023).

The lack of preparedness and response to natural disasters results to loss of lives, economic disruptions, and prolonged recovery (Kurata et al., 2023). Thus, to study the lack of preparedness and response was urgent. This urgency was coupled with scarcity of research, thus conducting this study was essential.

### **Theoretical Lens**

This study was grounded in the Community Resilience Theory proposed by Norris et al. (2008). Community Resilience Theory posited that a community's ability to adapt and recover from adversity was driven by the effective mobilization of its dynamic resources and social networks in response to challenges.

This theory suggested that resilience was not merely the result of individual efforts but was deeply embedded in collective actions and the social infrastructure of the community. It proposed that the interplay of resources such as leadership, communication, social support, and economic stability created a robust framework that enabled communities to respond to and overcome crises. By focusing on this mobilization process, the theory highlighted the importance of proactive engagement, coordination, and flexibility in fostering resilience. By focusing on this mobilization process, the theory highlights the importance of proactive engagement, coordination, and flexibility in fostering resilience.

### **Methods**

A qualitative research design using a case study approach was employed. The study was conducted in Barangay Masara, Maco, Davao de Oro. Participants included five barangay disaster volunteers and seven residents, selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected via in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to interpret data, with attention to credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness.

### **Results and Discussion**

The results of this study revealed the various struggles faced by residents during natural disasters, along with their coping strategies. Reflecting on the narratives provided by the participants, it became clear to me that their experiences highlight not only their struggles but also their determination and the valuable insights they have gained. These outcomes align with the concept of community resilience, which emphasizes a community's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from natural disasters. From the survivors' stories, I understood that this resilience is cultivated through preparedness, collective strength, ingenuity, and collaboration among individuals, organizations, and local authorities.

### Struggles

Participants were often caught off guard, experiencing fear, disorientation, and anxiety during disasters. Many lost their homes, possessions, and loved ones. The psychological impact included trauma, sleeplessness, and persistent fear.

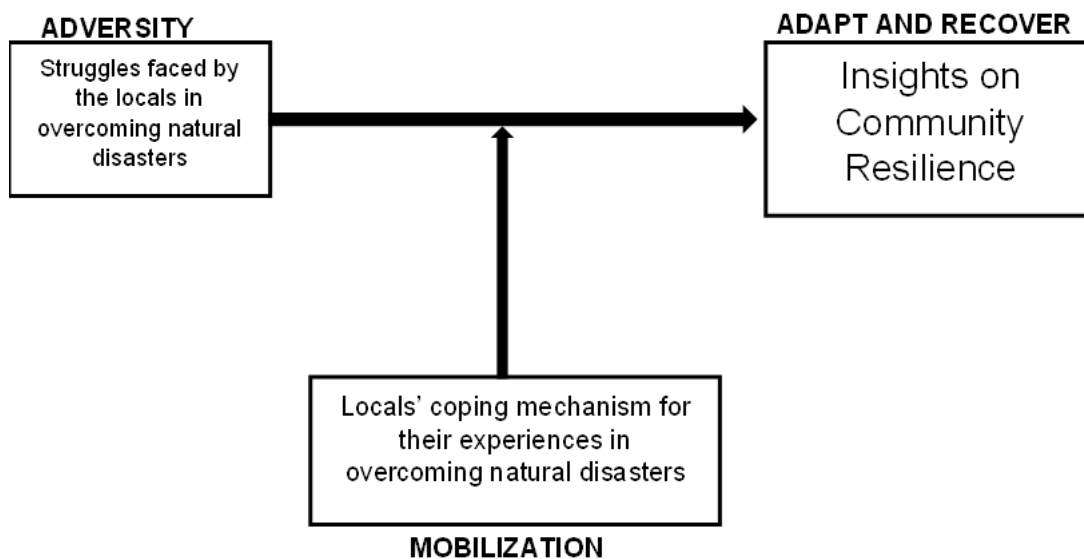
### Coping Mechanisms

Survivors relied on prayer, psychological support, and community solidarity. Many embraced positivity, participated in relief efforts, and drew strength from government aid and faith-based initiatives.

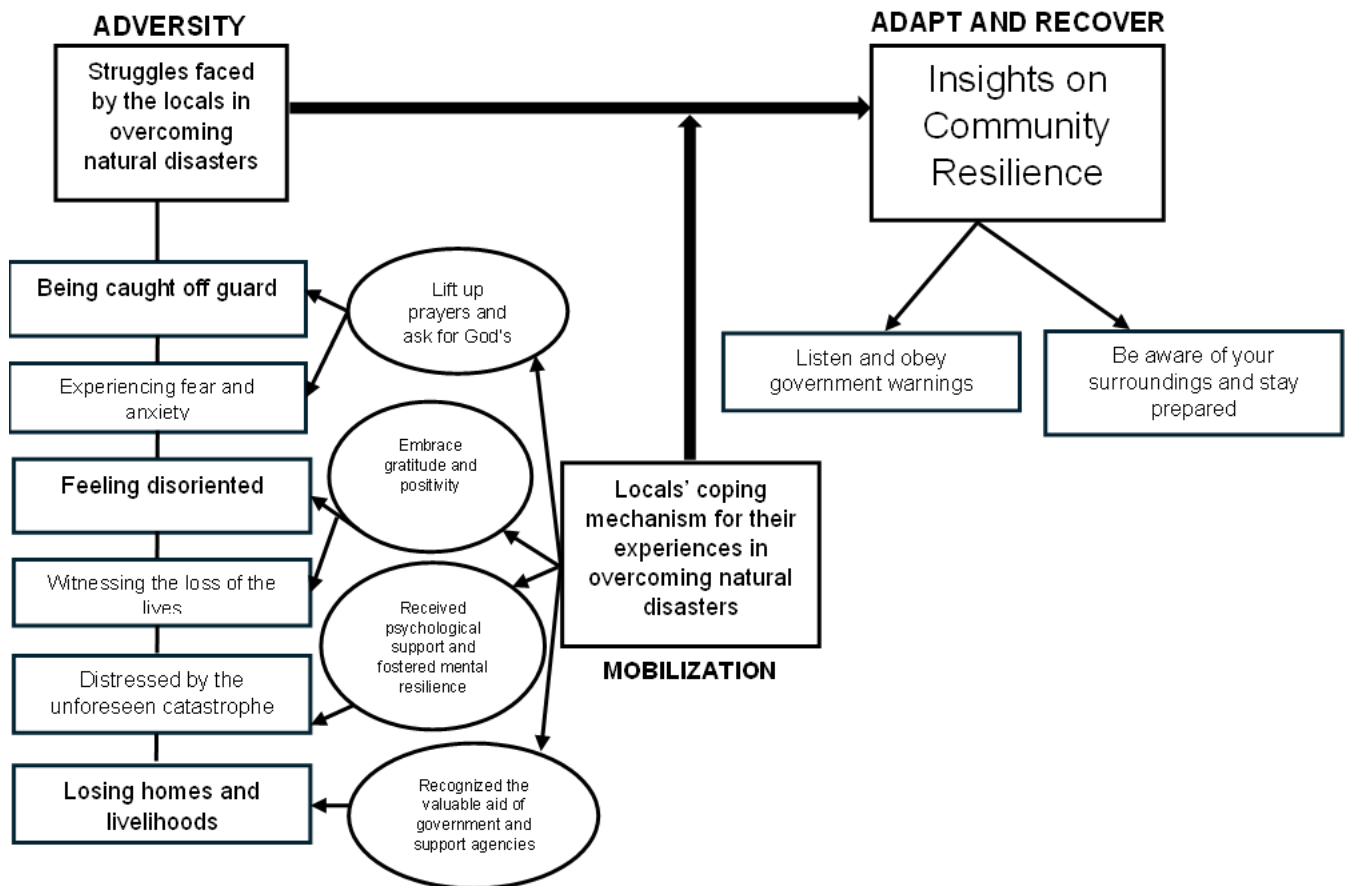
### Insights

Participants emphasized the importance of preparedness, environmental awareness, and obeying evacuation orders. They advocated for stronger early warning systems and more active local government involvement.

The findings underscore the significance of community resilience as framed by Norris et al.'s (2008) Community Resilience Theory. Adaptive responses emerged not only from individual strength but from collective efforts, social networks, and institutional support. The need for localized disaster education and mental health interventions was also evident.



**Figure 1. Struggles In Overcoming Natural Disasters, Coping Mechanisms, and Insights of People Living in Mining Sites**



**Figure 2: Emerging themes of Struggles in Overcoming Natural Disasters, Coping Mechanisms, and Insights of People Living in Mining Sites**

## Conclusions

This study highlights the critical reality faced by communities living in high-risk mining areas. The voices of survivors captured through interviews and focus group discussions reveal the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of natural disasters. Their testimonies underscore how unpreparedness, limited resources, and sudden-onset hazards compound the vulnerability of marginalized populations. Despite these conditions, the resilience shown by these communities is a testament to their strength anchored in faith, solidarity, and the support of local institutions.

The lessons drawn from their experiences point to urgent systemic gaps in disaster response, risk communication, and mental health support. There is a pressing need to move from reactive to proactive disaster risk reduction strategies. By strengthening local capacities, establishing reliable early warning systems, and promoting community-centered policies, affected populations can be better equipped to face future disasters. Ultimately, investing in people's resilience before, during, and after crises ensures not only survival but long-term recovery and empowerment.

## Recommendations

To reduce the vulnerability of communities in high-risk mining zones, it is essential to prioritize disaster preparedness and localized risk communication. Local governments should invest in proactive strategies such as the installation of reliable early warning systems, evacuation mapping, and the regular conduct

of communitywide drills. Integrating disaster education in schools and barangaylevel awareness campaigns can also foster a culture of safety. These efforts must be accompanied by the provision of psychological first aid and trauma support services for both survivors and first responders to address long-term emotional impacts.

In parallel, empowering communities through grassroots disaster risk reduction programs and participatory planning will strengthen local response capacities. Authorities must work closely with residents to develop and validate contingency plans tailored to the specific hazards in their area. Investment in resilient infrastructure, prepositioning of emergency supplies, and continuous skills training for volunteers and responders are equally vital. These multi-layered recommendations aim to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations and reduce the devastating toll of future natural disasters.

### **Acknowledgment**

I sincerely extend my heartfelt gratitude to the residents of Barangay Masara, Maco, Davao de Oro, who generously shared their stories and experiences. I deeply appreciate the local government units, disaster response volunteers, and academic mentors who provided guidance and support throughout my research journey. I also wish to thank the Holy Cross of Davao College Graduate School faculty for their valuable insights and encouragement. I am especially grateful to my family and friends for their unwavering support and understanding, and above all, to Almighty God for granting me the wisdom, strength, and grace to complete this study.

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