Exploration of Mental Health in Children Victims of Bullying

Herman*[1], Mohammad Fikri[1], Purwaty[1]

[1] Department of Health Promotion, Tadulako University, Indonesia
*Corresponding author, contact: herman.untad@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the mental health of bullying victims at SDN 3 Palu. This type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach. The research informants were 9 people based on purposive sampling technique. Data management using matrix techniques. The results showed that physical and non-physical bullying experienced by the victim caused thoughts of a negative self-concept, thoughts of hatred towards the perpetrator, and delusions/hallucinations due to trauma, so that the victim felt a threat. Conflict motives and control are carried out by communicating the events experienced, avoiding the perpetrator, and tend to remain silent when experiencing bullying, the victim feels unable to solve the problem on his own. Informants have less social interaction because their friendship is unhappy and do not feel calm when they are at school even though they have received support from their closest people. The emotions possessed by the informants were in the form of frequent crying, anger, and fear for no apparent reason as well as thinking disorders that disrupted daily activities. The advice given is that the school and parents should give attention and in-depth guidance to victims and perpetrators of bullying, present an anti-bullying program, and examine variable aspects from the point of view of teachers and perpetrators.

Keywords: Mental Health, Children, Bullying

Key Messages:

- The physical and non-physical bullying experienced by the victims caused negative self-concepts, thoughts of hatred towards the perpetrator, and trauma-related delusions/hallucinations, leading to feelings of threat.
- Conflict motives and control were achieved through communication, avoidance, and silence, with victims feeling unable to solve the problem alone.
- Informants had less social interaction and experienced emotions such as frequent crying, anger, and fear without apparent reason, as well as thinking disorders that disrupted daily activities

1. Introduction

Child welfare cannot be achieved by the presence of acts of violence against children. One form of violence that often occurs in children is bullying (1). The impact of bullying on children such as loneliness, poor academic achievement, difficulty adapting, involvement in criminal acts and vulnerability to mental and emotional disorders such as anxiety, insomnia, and depression that can continue and persist into adulthood (2). Bullying is like an

iceberg phenomenon that appears small on the surface but has major problems at the bottom, where only a few cases have appeared in public spaces while there are still many other cases that have not been exposed until now (3). Parents, teachers and the community consider the phenomenon of bullying in schools to be commonplace and only respond to it if the victim is injured so that he needs medical assistance in terms of physical bullying. This is due to a lack of understanding of the negative effects of bullying on children's development and achievement at school (4).

School Bullying Statistics found that 85% of bullying cases occurred in schools and were not stopped by teachers. Data from KPAI states that bullying behavior from 2011 to August 2018 was 1,589 cases. KPAI explained that in 2019 the trend of cases of violence against children was dominated by bullying (5).

Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted by the author at SD Negeri 3 Palu. According to one teacher who was an informant, bullying at SD Negeri 3 Palu needs special attention and proper handling. The teaching staff have been given training in handling violence in schools, so that their competencies should be able to create a safe and comfortable learning climate that is free from violence. According to information obtained from one of the teachers, there are students who have a background of mental problems who often receive bullying from some of their classmates. The bullying experienced by the victim is in the form of verbal, relational, and physical bullying. In addition, several years ago there were students with broken home backgrounds who experienced relational bullying so these students no longer continued their education and became drug addicts a few years later.

2. Methods

This study used a qualitative research method with a case study design. This study is done onand the condition of natural objects. In qualitative research the researcher acts as a key instrument, the data collection technique is done by triangulation (combined), the data analysis is inductive, the informants used are informants who have experienced the substance that will be studied through in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews) and stop when there is no information. new again. Informants in this study consisted of key informant 1 Psychologist, informants Ordinary consisted of 5 students of SD Negeri 3 Palu who have experienced bullying, and informant Supplement consists of three people, which is the closest friend of the victim of bullying, parents of children victims of bullying, and 1 teacher of SD Negeri 3 Palu. The number of informants in this study were 9 people. Collecting data through triangulation of sources, triangulation of techniques, and triangulation of theories.

3. Results

Mind Control and Imagination Variable

In-depth interviews were conducted to explore information regarding "What types of bullying events have you experienced?" the following results were obtained.

"The type of bullying is being insinuated like that, then it's like being hurt, you say I'm like being told behind my back, then you say that my friends don't want to be friends with me, until I'm alone, until almost one class doesn't want to be friends with me, all girls. First there was one of my friends, I played with her and then accidentally spilled the water on her shirt until she got angry with me (PN, 11 years old, May 13, 2020).

"I was often invited to fight, then after that I was often teased, usually if I just sat down I was teased, after that I was bullied, my shoes were often hidden... Being bullied is usually during recess. I don't know why I was bullied either, then I made friends but when I went to the mosque after praying, I was immediately unfriended, so I was bullied continuously" (PK, 11 years old, May 13, 2020).
"I've been kicked in the stomach, hit, slapped, spoken to (AN, 12 years old, May 14, 2020).

Based on statements from ordinary informants, it is known that the types of physical bullying experienced by informants are being hit, pinched, slapped, kicked, and destruction of property. Meanwhile, non-physical bullying experienced in the form of slander, reproaches, harsh words, exclusion, and cyber bullying. The occurrence of bullying is due to competition, pranks, and the desire to be recognized.

Motives Integration Variables and Conflict / Frustration Control

In-depth interviews were conducted with ordinary informants to find out "Do you communicate the events you experience to others?" the results obtained are as follows:

"Only to my mom. Once I told my mom, when I came home I used to tell my mom that I was bullied at school, so she used to say don't pay attention to them, just ignore them. Then at first I talked nicely to them at first they didn't accept it, then after that how many weeks later, already ... they started again like that" (AM, 12 years old, June 19, 2020).

"Ohh... nothing, I'm lazy to tell, because I'm not comfortable with my parents if they know, so I've been quiet all this time" (RH, 11 years old, June 27, 2020).

Based on statements from ordinary informants, it is known that informants communicated the events experienced to the closest people such as friends, parents, and teachers, and 1 informant stated that he did not communicate the events experienced. Victims of bullying report the problem if it has occurred repeatedly and sometimes hide the problems experienced due to fear and worry due to the threat of the perpetrator.

The Feeling Variable of Security and Acceptance

In-depth interviews were conducted with ordinary informants to find out "Do you feel happy with the friendships you have?" the results obtained are as follows:

"In the past, no, very sad... no friends, now it's getting better" (PN, 11 years old, May 13, 2020)
"With A and F, I am happy, but not with others" (PK, 11 years old, May 13, 2020)

"In the past, I was picky about my friends. The only close friends were with C and A" (AN, 12 years old, May 14, 2020)

"In the past, I didn't because new friends were slandered like that, it's not good, but now I'm happier" (AM, 12 years old, June 19, 2020).

Based on statements from ordinary informants, it is known that informants have less happy friendship quality after unpleasant events. This is because the closeness and togetherness that exists is still lacking so that the intensity of bullying experienced is higher.

Healthy Emotional Variables

In-depth interviews were conducted with ordinary informants to find out "How do you go about your daily activities after experiencing bullying?" the results obtained are as follows:

"First, I was not eager to learn, very sad. When I wanted to ask to transfer schools, when my mom told me to get up I didn't want to get up, I said I didn't want to go to school, then after that I fantasized in front of the house, then my mom asked me to take a shower immediately, I wanted to go to school, I wanted to report what your friends said. I felt sad, I didn't want to go to school, I wanted to change schools, I just hurt myself like that, I scratched myself, I didn't want to meet them, I didn't want to study at that school anymore" (PN, 11 years old, May 13, 2020).

"I'm more careful maybe, because I'm a bit scared, I'm also disturbed because I was given that" (AN, 12 years old, May 14, 2020).

Based on statements from informants, it is known that the victim's activities are disrupted after experiencing bullying. This is because the physical and psychological disorders experienced lead to new behaviors that are different from usual due to changes in feelings. In addition, it is known that the victim's activities are disrupted after experiencing bullying due to behavioral and psychological changes. This is reinforced by the statement of an additional informant, that the victim's interest became reduced and experienced changes in undergoing daily activities after experiencing bullying. The victim experienced complaints of pain due to psychological disturbance, drastic changes in attitude, and avoidance of social activities involving other students.

Based on statements from informants, it is known that informants usually experience thinking

problems, especially during the learning process in class, such as loss of concentration and difficulty in receiving lessons. This is reinforced by the statement of the key informant, that the impact of bullying on the quality of student learning can cause academic problems, such as loss of concentration, decreased achievement, poor self-adjustment, and loss of enthusiasm for school.

4. Discussion

Mind Control and Imagination Variables

Thoughts can control or evoke feelings. Taste is the manifestation or expression of what we think. That is all the flavors that arise depend on the mind. The influence of the power of imagination generated from thoughts can have positive effects and negative effects, depending on the individual in cultivating the power of imagination. Imagination has a power that affects a person's mind and physique (6). The implementation of this research was carried out through Whatsapp video calls and direct interviews on May 13, 2020 - July 10 2020 with in-depth interviews with ordinary informants, namely children who are victims of bullying, key informants, namely psychologists and additional informants, namely friends of children who are victims of bullying, parents of children who are victims of bullying, and a teacher at SD Negeri 3 Palu.

Based on the interviews conducted, the informants stated that they had experienced physical and non-physical bullying. The victim has feelings of hatred towards the perpetrator because of the view that the perpetrator does not feel guilty for his actions because he does not apologize to the victim and ignores the victim when he wants to solve the problem. Bullying is described as bad behavior that is painful for the victim. The victim's negative self-concept is in the form of feelings of guilt, helplessness, and worthlessness so that he feels his presence is not accepted by his peers. Teenagers who are victims of bullying tend to be pessimistic, lack enthusiasm, and have low fighting power. the victim stated that she experienced delusions/hallucinations due to psychological trauma in the form of feelings of fear of being hurt and feeling sad, and afraid if the unpleasant incident happened again.

This research is in line with the research of Harefa & Rozali (2017), which states that during adolescence there is a natural self-concept formation (7). This means that the bullying received by the informants has an impact on the teenager's self-concept to be negative. These negative feelings include feelings of unlovability, guilt, hatred, and neglect which lead to negative perceptions of themselves. This is also in line with the research results of Khasanah, Damayanti, & Sirodj (2017), showing that those who experience bullying have a high frequency of negative automatic thoughts due to efforts to suppress the emotions they feel so that the manifestations of thoughts that appear become negative (8).

Motives Integration Variables and Conflict / Frustration Control

Motive can be interpreted as the power contained within the individual to act or act. Conflict or frustration control is carried out by adjusting as mastery, that is, having the ability to plan and organize responses in such a way that it can efficiently handle all kinds of conflicts, difficulties, and frustrations (6). Based on interviews conducted by researchers, the informant communicates the events experienced to the closest people such as friends, parents, and teachers when it is heavy. Victims sometimes keep their problems secret because of fear and worry due to the threat of the perpetrator. The social relationship between the victim and the perpetrator becomes worse after bullying occurs. tend to just be silent and do not defend themselves because they are afraid that if they fight, the perpetrator will hit them. Victims have not been able to solve their problems through an orientation on problem-focused coping, but instead try to solve their problems with emotional-focused coping by seeking emotional and social support, avoidance, and self-control.

This is also in line with the research of Tristanti, Nisak, & Azizah (2020), which states that victims often keep their bullying secret because they feel afraid to report to others. Victims are often ignored if they only report verbal bullying (9). This is also in line with the research of Azhari (2019), which states that victims try to respond directly, including defense reactions by adjusting themselves, keeping all negative and positive emotions in the heart (10).

The Feeling Variable of Security and Acceptance

Feelings of security and acceptance mean the ability to accept other people in their lives, which means the willingness to accept their presence, love, respect, make friendships, and treat others well. People who have self-

acceptance will feel safe to accept others, pay attention to others, and have an interest in others, such as showing empathy and sympathy (6). Based on interviews conducted by researchers, the informant stated that they had unhappy friendship qualities after an unpleasant event. Victims feel uncomfortable making friends with random people, so they prefer to be picky in their associates. The emergence of anti-social behavior due to a sense of inferiority and exclusion. The victim feels uneasy because she is often harassed, beaten, and slandered, which causes the victim to be shunned by other friends. The social support that bullying victims receive from their friends is in the form of encouragement, attention, assistance, and being entertained.

According to the theory of Santrock (2007), describes the high quality of friendship is marked by a high sense of togetherness, help, security, and closeness that exists in friendship. This is in line with Magfirah's (2017) research, which states that a negative school climate has a high tendency towards bullying behavior (11). According to Fajriyah's (2019) research, informants prefer social self-esteem to make friends and be a little closed with new people, social self-esteem is closed with new people because they do not have the confidence to make friends with anyone (12).

Healthy Emotional Variables

A healthy emotional state is the ability to feel and understand more effectively the power of emotional sensitivity. The ability to recognize your own emotions is a sign of a healthy emotional state. The ability to recognize feelings that occur from time to time in everyday life. Handling is needed so that feelings can be expressed appropriately which depends on self-awareness, releasing anxiety, gloom, or offense, and the consequences that arise due to failure of emotional skills (6). Based on the interviews conducted by researchers, the victim's activities were disrupted due to physical and psychological disorders due to changes in feelings. The disturbance was in the form of a loss of enthusiasm and motivation so that there were victims who asked to change schools and became lazy to go to school. The emotional condition of the bullying victim causes a change in feelings to negative emotions in the form of frequent crying responses and unstable emotions due to frequent bullying. The victim's feelings of fear are in the form of fear of being shunned and having no friends, fear of being scolded by parents for not being a good child, and fear of receiving bullying again. Victims often experience feelings of anger for no reason because they want to vent their emotions and stress in the form of aggressive behavior towards themselves, other people, and the objects around them.

According to Rigby's (2002) theory, the impacts that occur on victims of bullying include having poor physical health, disturbing mental health, such as depression and internalization problems (anxiety, fear, and withdrawal from the social environment), and affecting the psychosocial of individuals (13). This is in line with the results of research by Ellisyani & Setiawan (2017), showing that victims of bullying experience both physical and psychological problems (14). Individuals who are victims of bullying will experience health problems such as feeling depressed, trauma, physical injury, depression, and fear.

5. Conclusion

Bullying victims suffer from negative self-concept, prejudice toward the perpetrator, and fear of being hurt, leading to emotional and psychological disturbances. They tend to communicate their experience to close ones but feel insecure and avoid the perpetrator. Quality friendships are affected by a sense of inferiority and exclusion, causing anti-social behavior. Victims feel anxious and emotional disturbances causing changes in daily activities, such as crying and feeling weak or afraid. Victims also experience angry feelings and have difficulty concentrating, affecting academic performance. The school and parents should provide guidance, anti-bullying programs, and examine the perspective of teachers and perpetrators to prevent bullying.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

References

1. Lestari ND, Hidayati LN, Abadiyah SS. "Gema Suling" Gerakan Masyarakat Sekolah Tanggap Bullying dalam Upaya Pencegahan Bullying pada Anak Usia Sekolah. JS. 2019 Apr 30;8(1):101–10.
2. Devita Y, Dyna F. Analisis Hubungan Karakteristik Anak dan Lingkungan Keluarga dengan Perilaku Bullying. HEALTH CARE : JURNAL KESEHATAN. 2018;7(2):15–21.
3. Noviasty R, Susanti R, Sari IW. Karakteristik Nutrisi Korban dan Pelaku Bullying Pada Anak Usia Sekolah Dasar. Al-Sihah: The Public Health Science Journal [Internet]. 2017 [cited 2023 Apr 14]; Available from: https://journal3.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/Al-Sihah/article/view/3761
4. Nasir. Konseling Behavioral: Solusi Alternatif Mengatasi Bullying Anak di Sekolah. Konseling Edukasi: Journal of Guidance and Counseling. 2018;2(2):67–82.
5. Desriani D, Devita Y. The Effect Of Health Education On Bullying Knowledge Among Primary School Student. JPK. 2019 Dec 13;8(2):28–34.
6. Semiun Y. Kesehatan Mental (Jilid Satu). Yogyakarta: Kanisius; 2006.
7. Harefa, Rozali. Pengaruh Dukungan Sosial terhadap Konsep Diri pada Remaja Korban Bullying. Jurnal Psikologi. 2017;2(2):1–12.
8. Khasanah AN, Damayanti T, Sirodj DAN. Gambaran Negative Automatic Thoughts pada Remaja Korban Bullying di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kota Bandung. psy. 2017 Dec 30;4(2):239–50.
9. Tristanti I, Nisak AZ, Azizah N. Bullying dan Efeknya Bagi Siswa Sekolah Dasar di Kabupaten Kudus. Jurnal Ilmu Keperawatan dan Kebidanan. 2020 Mar 3;11(1):1.
10. Azhari. Implementasi Konseling Kelompok Mengatasi Praktik Bullying. Indonesian Journal of Counseling & Development. 2019;1(1):19–29.
11. Magfirah U, Rachmawati MA. Hubungan antara Iklim Sekolah dengan Kecenderungan Perilaku Bullying [Internet]. Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya Universitas Islam Indonesia; 2017. Available from: http://eprints.unm.ac.id/10793/1/6.%20JURNAL%201%281%29.pdf
12. Fajriyah BN, Setiawati D. Studi tentang Self Esteem Korban Bullying di SMA Negeri 4 Pasuruan. Jurnal BK UNESA. 2019;10(3):42–8.
13. Rigby K. Effects of peer victimization in schools and perceived social support on adolescent well-being. J Adolesc. 2000 Feb;23(1):57–68.
14. Ellisyani ND. Regulasi Emosi pada Korban Bullying di SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang. Psikis. 2017 Feb 24;2(1):50–62.