Coping Strategy among Bullying Survivors

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Abstract. Bullying is a phenomenon that often occurs in adolescents because at this time children are in an unstable period and are easily influenced by external stimuli. The selection and use of the right coping mechanism can help individuals to reduce the stress experienced, so they can successfully pass the stressful event. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach. Research subjects were two persons who were victims of bullying in Indonesia. Data collection tools using observation and in-depth interviews. Data analysis techniques using phenomenology generated from in-depth interview data by researchers carried out a reduction of several statements into core categories that showed the essence of participants' experiences about a phenomenon. The results of the study suggest that there are several factors that cause the subject to experience bullying, namely there are ethnic, socio-economic differences, and resistance to group pressure. The perpetrators of bullying never apologize and show no remorse when they have bullied. The form of bullying experienced is physical and verbal. Coping used by the subject is problem focused coping and emotion focused coping.

Keywords: Bullying and coping.

Introduction

Bullying is a phenomenon that often occurs in adolescents because at this time children are in a period of instability and easily influenced by external stimuli (Kartono, 2011). Simbolon (2012) suggested that bullying is aggressive and suppressive behavior in the form of direct or verbal physical actions. Bullying can occur anywhere and to anyone both in adults, adolescents and children. Given the rampant phenomenon, it is very important to know things related to bullying. McCullough (2008) argued that the desire for revenge easily arises when individuals feel victimized, ostracized, criticized or hated. Bullying victims usually do not dare to fight. The pressure experienced is what makes the victim hold a grudge, which ultimately has the possibility of being vented to other individuals. Studies conducted with school children aged 9-14 years show the fact that, 43% of boys who experience bullying have a desire to revenge on the perpetrators of bullying (McCullough, 2008). The subject of bullying victims also revealed that they wanted revenge on the person who bullied him.

Simbolon (2012) shows the impact that occurs on victims of bullying, which causes victims to become desperate, aloof, unwilling to hang out, not excited, even hallucinating. Seeing the magnitude of the negative impacts that can arise due to bullying, there should be an action taken to prevent this. The thing that is very interesting is that there are some individuals who are able to survive and not become victims of bullying. While some victims of bullying are not able to survive or even turn into bullying agents after experiencing it.

The selection and use of the right coping method can help individuals to reduce the stress experienced, so they can successfully pass the stressful event. Stress and coping mechanisms work together, the most appropriate method to use is depending on the type of stress and individual needs. The results of this study revealed that a meditation-based stress reduction counseling program can help and guide people to find out which coping method suits their needs (Baqutayan, 2015). Miranda (2013) suggests that coping strategies are efforts that individuals make to deal with problems or protect themselves from the psychological pressures caused by various social problems. The use of coping is right, making some individuals able to reduce the pressure experienced, so as not to fall into sadness and feelings of insecurity and inferiority. The results of the research by Hoisko, Uusiautti, and Maata (2012) show that victims of bullying use different coping to deal with bullying. Coping forms used are cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and creative coping. Forgiveness, omission of negative thoughts, social support and spirituality are forms of coping that are done and help victims in the healing process. Forgiveness, elimination of negative thoughts, social support and spirituality are forms of emotion focused coping. Rising from adversity due to bullying is a very heavy thing, not all individuals are able to do it.

Based on the phenomenon described above, researchers were moved to conduct research on bullying survivors. The fact that not all individuals are able to do the right coping to deal with bullying, and not all individuals are able to survive and not become bullies themselves even though they have experienced bullying. The researchers are interested in revealing the experiences of survivors so they can survive bullying. Next the researchers conducted a study entitled "Coping on Bullying Survivors". The purpose of this study was to determine the coping process carried out by bullying survivors, so that they can survive bullying.
Literature Review

Bullying

Bullying is an act of hurting and intimidating other individuals. Physically, like pushing or hitting, emotional like a nickname. Bullying always involves abuse of power, bullying rarely happens only once, on the contrary it happens repeatedly (Pegis, 2013). Bullying can include verbal and physical attacks, threats, 'jokes' or language, ridicule and criticism, insulting behavior and facial expressions. These factors work individually, or in groups to contribute to child bullying (Jan & Husain, 2015).

Factors that cause bullying are divided into internal and external factors. As an internal factor is personality characteristics, violence experienced as past experiences, family attitudes and parenting. External factors that cause violence are environment and culture. There are several factors that cause bullying, namely ethnic differences, resistance to group pressure, differences in physical conditions, entering a new school, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. The results of the research that has been carried out by symbolon on boarding students show that the factors that cause bullying are seniority, imitation and past experience (Simbolon, 2012).

Individuals do bullying for various reasons, one of which is an increase in social status. Bullying actors generally have high self-esteem, they do not show remorse when they have bullied. Perpetrators judge that bullying is not morally wrong (Healey, 2011).

Nakamoto and Schwartz suggested that bullying has an impact on decreasing academic achievement (Santrock, 2011). Bullying has long-term effects on victims such as reducing self-esteem, high rates of absenteeism, depression and even suicide and a decline in academic performance. Bullying also disrupts children's social development and personality, and this can lead to social isolation and dropping out of school. Often victims of bullying do not have good friends in class, causing feelings of isolation (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Adult individuals who experience bullying during their childhood, become anxious and experience difficulties in social situations. In some individuals it causes problems of lack of confidence, agoraphobia, and fear of being helpless in embarrassing situations (Perdew, 2015).

The form of bullying consists of several categories, namely (1) physical bullying, like pushing, hitting, kicking, tackling, throwing food, spitting on, and damaging property. (2) verbal bullying, is mocking, giving nickname, and threatening. (3) social bullying, is spreading rumors or gossip, humiliating and isolating from friendships and rejection. (4) cyberbullying is indirectly bullying because it uses media assistance such as mobile phones or computers. The perpetrator uses SMS, e-mail or messages through social media to disturb victims (Perdew, 2015).

Coping

Coping strategy is an effort made by individuals to deal with problems or protect themselves from psychological stresses caused by problems of social experience (Miranda, 2013). Coping strategies are individual behaviors that continue to change with cognitive efforts, and the behavior of managing specific external or internal demands that are perceived as heavy or exceeding the resources possessed. Realistic and flexible thoughts and actions can be useful for reducing stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984).

Coping consists of two types, namely problem oriented (problem focused coping) and emotional oriented (emotion focused coping). Problem focused coping is a cognitive strategy for handling stress or coping used by individuals who face problems and try to solve them. Problem focused coping aims to reduce stressful environmental demands or develop resources to meet these demands. Individuals usually use problem focused coping when individuals believe that they are able to change stressful situations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984).

Emotion focused coping is a stress management strategy where individuals respond to stressful situations emotionally, especially using defensive assessment. Emotion focused coping is an internal strategy. Emotion focused coping aims to control emotional responses using behavioral and cognitive approaches. Behavioral approaches are carried out by diverting individual attention from the problems at hand. For example, the transfer can take the form of using alcohol or drugs, seeking social support from other individuals, exercising, and watching television. The cognitive approach is done by changing the mind about stressful situations, such as rejecting unpleasant facts. Individuals usually use emotion focused coping when they believe that they are not able to change the situation or condition that causes stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984).

Increased coping in individuals occurs if victims of bullying do not blame themselves for their helplessness, so they can survive. Coping requires a very long process and requires a lot of encouragement to do it. Each individual has its own way to do coping related to talent and habits in facing life challenges (Hoisko, Uusiauti, & Maata, 2012).

Methods

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is subjective meaning of the subject disclosure research on the phenomenon that became the object of scientific study. The research model used is phenomenology, which is a model or approach that describes a person's awareness or experience or more about a phenomenon (Hanurawan, 2016). Research with a phenomenological approach was chosen because researchers wanted to reveal more about the experiences of research subjects in the face of bullying.

The subjects selected in this qualitative study were individuals who were victims of bullying during their
elementary school in Sidoarjo and victims of bullying during their high school in Makassar. Criteria for subjects selected in this study is individuals who have experienced bullying both physically and verbally. Also subjects have successfully survived bullying and did not turn into a bullying agent. The first subject with the initials MU, currently 22 years old, is a girl who became a victim of bullying and received bad treatment such as physical and non-physical. The period of bullying was one and a half year. The second subject with the initials AWM aged 24 years is a girl who was a victim of verbal and physical bullying. The period of bullying was from grades 1-2 during her high school years.

Data collection in this study is observation and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are used to obtain a rich and in-depth information about thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, basic reasons, motivations, and participants’ feelings about the phenomenon under study. While observation is an intuitive conclusion obtained from researchers at the time and after making observations of reactions that appear in participants when interacting with topics or phenomena (Hanurawan, 2016).

The data analysis technique used is phenomenological analysis technique which is generated from the data of in-depth interviews by researchers to reduce the statements into the core themes (or core categories) that show the essence of participants’ experiences about a phenomenon (Hanurawan, 2016). Giorgi and Giorgi explained the stages of phenomenological research analysis, namely reading data to understand the whole, determining the parts to define meaningful units, transforming meaningful units into psychologically sensitive expressions, then determining structures (Hanurawan, 2016).

Validation carried out in the study was through participant checks or members of participant checks. Participants or members of the participants review the conclusions of the initial results of the study which are the results of their interpretation of the phenomenological experience (Hanurawan, 2016).

Result and Discussion

This research was conducted in Malang where the subject under study is a final semester student and in Makassar a fresh graduate student. Researchers try to explore in depth so that they can answer the research questions made, namely "what is the coping process carried out by the bullying survivors, so that they can survive bullying". Research data obtained from direct interviews conducted by researchers to the subject of the research by asking several open questions that make the subject describe experiences that are natural subjects and what the subject feels.

All subject statements are considered important because they relate to phenomena which are categorized based on certain themes, so researchers can understand the phenomenon under study. The researcher then uses these themes to find the causes and forms of bullying and the description of the coping process carried out by victims in Malang and Makassar. This is what can answer research questions that have been formulated by researchers. Based on the results of interviews conducted from the research subject and data analysis that has been carried out, the results obtained can answer the research focus questions, namely:

Factors that cause bullying to bullying survivors

Bullying is an act of hurting and intimidating other individuals. Either physically, like pushing or hitting, or emotionally like a nickname. Bullying always involves abuse of power, bullying rarely happens only once, on the contrary it happens repeatedly (Pegis, 2013). MU and AWM experienced repeated unpleasant treatment from their friends. MU experienced bullying since grade 4 in elementary school in Sidoarjo. MU felt that the factor why she was bullied was because she was not Chinese and had low economic status. While AWM experienced bullying since 2-3 years of high school because there were a group of people who bullied her. This is consistent with what was stated by Simbolon (2012) that there are several factors that cause bullying, namely ethnic differences, resistance to group pressure, differences in physical conditions, entering a new school, sexual orientation and socio-economic background.


"…terus aku pikir masalah pertamanya adalah karena aku bukan keturunan Chinese akhirnya setelah dipikir-pikir lagi masalahnya adalah karena aku tidak kaya, tidak sekaya merek..” (MU: 33-36).

"saya kasi tau pihak yang a dan yang b. Misalnya ini pihak a dan b eee lagi tidak baku anu ki. Terus saya bilang a apa yang na bilang b, b juga bilang. Eeeee salah paham mi, tapi maksud ku saya lain ki. Baru mereka lagi lain ki penilaianya tentang saya.” (AWM: 69-74).

"…sy sama IM, sama ini IC pacarnya R baku janjiri mau ketemu dirumahnya IC karena kemarin dari miki situ tapi sama-sama ki R ini saya tidak tau bilang ternyata R belum tau, saya nda taa. Saya cuman diajak ji juga dan pas ka kesana, sampai disana saya tidak kabari RI bilang ada ka disitu.” (AWM: 25-29).

The perpetrators of bullying who attacked MU and AWM never apologized, even the perpetrators who bullied AWM did not want to apologise just because he was not told if AWM went all three and his girlfriend also joined. Healey (2011) suggests that individuals bullying with various reasons, one of which is an increase in social status. Bullying actors generally have
high self-esteem, and do not show remorse when they have bullied. Perpetrators judge that bullying is not morally wrong. “Yah enggak, karena sampe sekarang mereka juga gak ada kata maaf ke aku, mereka gak ada rasa bersalah bahwa mereka pernah jahatin aku tuh gak ada.” (MU: 612-614).

“...sampa demi tuhan saya tidak akan maufkan ko.” (AWM: 35-36).

Bullying has an impact on decreasing academic achievement (Santrock, 2011). Bullying also disrupts children's social development and personality, and this can lead to social isolation and dropping out of school, as MU feels like quitting school. Often victims of bullying do not have good friends in class, causing feelings of isolation, such as AWM being ostracized by friends (Harris & Petrie, 2003).

“Kelas 5 udah 10 besar lagi kelas 6 10 besar tapi kelas 4 tuh aku kayak nya dibawah 10 besar karena yah itu kayak seokah aja gak mau padahal aku kelas 1 kelas 2 kelas 3 itu aku selalu ranking 2 ranking 1 ranking 2 ranking 1 tapi begitu aku kelas 4 itu aku ya sekolah aja aku gak mau...” (MU: 370-374).

“dikucilkan kan toh sama ada sekelompok yang dulunya saya akrab, baka bawa sama mereka tapi ujun-ujungnya begitu.” (AWM: 66-67).

The forms of bullying experienced by survivors of bullying: MU experienced a form of bullying in school like insulting, being pushed, kicking, and her hand being beaten to bruises. Whereas AWM was treated like her head was hit and pushed, she was humiliated, and threatened to be killed and beaten. As expressed by Perdew (2015) that there are several categories of bullying, namely (1) physical bullying, pushing, hitting, kicking, tackling, throwing food, spitting on, and damaging property. (2) verbal bullying, is mocking, giving nickname, and threatening. (3) social bullying, is spreading rumors or gossip, humiliating and isolating from friendship and rejection. (4) cyberbullying is indirectly bullying because it uses media assistance such as mobile phones or computers. Jan and Husain (2015) suggest that Bullying can include verbal and physical attacks, threats, ‘jokes’ or language, ridicule and criticism, insulting behavior and facial expressions.

“Aku selalu punya pikiran bahwa uangku gaib banyak mereka tapi aku gak pernah jahat ke mereka jadi itu bukan salah aku.. aku gak gak punya uang sebanyak mereka gak.. tapi aku selalu memainkan pada saat itu apala lagi pada saat itu papi ku itu terjarya jauh.. jadi kita ketemu itu bisa sebulan cuman 2 kali cuman sekarang terjarya di bogor jadi kayak aku gak mikirnya pada saat itu adalah eeeh papiku jeru jauh jauh gitu jadi aku gak boleh bikin masalah disekolah malah karena itu yang aku pikirin disekolah ku karena aku punya temen temen dirumah mereka sekolah di sekolah negeri pada saat itu smp mereka itu bisa cuman 25
persennya spp ku., makanya jadinya kayak aku gak boleh macem macem disekolah mahal karena kalo aku macem macem disekolah mahal papi harus bayar lebih mahal lagi gitu.” (MU: 306-320).

“...aku gak punya motivasi lain, aku gak punya temen lain jadi motivasi ku pada saat itu cuman keluarga ku aja gitu.” (AWM: 332-334).

“...banyak membaca buku atau artikel-artikel tentang pertemanan jadi berusaha ma memperbaiki diriku.” (AWM: 84-86).

“Eh kan ada ji teman-teman yang lain yang bisa ku temani sama-sama toh.” (AWM: 113-114).


“Ee cara ka hadapi itu dengan bersabar saja toh.” (AWM: 164).

“sekolah yah fokus ja saja belajar atau main hp atau ee itu hari waktu masalah R itu, dirangkul ka sama ini tiga sahabat” (AWM: 172-173).


“...karena ada ji teman-teman yang support ka.” (AWM: 241).

MU admitted that she did not like the bullying treatment she got from her friend. MU and AWM also had a time when she did not want to go to school. But MU tried to make herself more visible in school by singing, so the school could become a back-up subject to continue to survive in an environment that continues to bully her. Whereas AWM tried not to think about the problem until it dragged on and joined with friends who gave her emotional and social support. This is consistent with what was stated by Folkman and Lazarus (1984) that emotion focused coping aims to control emotional responses using behavioral and cognitive approaches. Behavioral approaches are carried out by diverting individual attention from the problems at hand.

“Aku baik baik aja nilaiku baik baik aja kelakuanku baik baik aja, aku ada bakat jadi aku membanggakan buat mereka itu cukup buat aku.” (MU: 681-697).


“kedua, masa hanya karena masalah begitu nah pindah ka sekolah, kalau pindah sekolah kayak takut skali ka begitue.” (AWM: baris 312-314).

AWM considers the events that she experienced may be due to her mistakes, in contrast to MU, she admitted that it was not her fault if she was bullied because she had never been evil to her friends and it was not her fault also if her parents did not have more money than her friends. Hoisko, Uusiauti, and Maata (2012) suggested that increasing coping in individuals occurs if victims of bullying do not blame themselves for their helplessness, so they can survive.

Hoisko, Uusiauti and Maata (2012) suggested that coping requires a very long process and requires a lot of encouragement to do it. Therefore, victims of bullying do not immediately rise, but they need other individuals who can provide social support such as from parents, teachers, or other friends. In addition, each individual has its own way to do coping related to talents and habits in facing life's challenges (Hoisko, Uusiauti, & Maata, 2012).

Conclusions

The conclusions obtained based on the findings of the study and the objectives to be achieved in this study were subjects experiencing bullying since the 4th grade of elementary school and high school. There are several factors that cause subjects to experience bullying, namely there are ethnic differences, socio-economic, and resistance to group pressure. Bullying perpetrators never apologize and do not show remorse when they bullied. The forms of bullying experienced by both subjects are physical and verbal. Verbal bullying, such as being insulted, ridiculed, and being threatened to be beaten and killed. Physical bullying such as the subject's body is pushed, kicked, beaten to bruises, and the head is hit and attacked. Both subjects used problem focused coping to be able to handle and solve their own problems with their own thinking.

Both subjects also used emotion focused coping as the handling of bullying that occurs to them, such as by doing stages before reaching how they can divert the problem so that they can be more calm. Stages of the coping process were carried out by the subject, namely the subject feeling uncomfortable when experiencing...
bullying. When that incident occurred, the subject learnt to accept the situation and familiarizes herself with the position. The subject feels angry, sad, disappointed, resentment and humiliated by her friends who are the perpetrators of bullying. When this happened to the 2nd subject she coped using prayers, without telling the problem to parents and close friends. In addition, subjects tried to divert their attention towards doing more positive things such as achieving academic and non-academic goals in their respective schools.

After that subjects felt excluded from school and wanted to change schools because they could not stand the intimidation. When this happened, the subject then looked for social support from friends and parents. Subjects remembered the struggles and responsibilities of their parents. The subject began to accept the situation, and the subject began to realize that he has a deficiency in the eyes of her friends. The subject forgives her friends who bullied her and begins to improve and adapt to the environment so she can survive and continue her education until graduation.

The results showed that there was a dynamic of revenge and forgiveness that occurred in the research subjects. Revenge occurs as a result of psychological and physical injury, while forgiveness is a subject’s action to relieve psychological distress from revenge.

Our suggestions for research subjects was that they should not do bullying to others with the motive to take revenge on how they were treated in their childhood years. And our advice for our readers is that if there is a problem, it is better to tell the parents or to the closest person so that the problem is less intense and can be handled immediately, and the victim does not need to save themselves from the problem alone. Our suggestion for the next researcher is that it is better to research about various different coping techniques so that how different people react to overcome the problem can be known.