

Mental Resilience of High School Adolescents Victims of Bullying in Semarang

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Abstract

The task of healthy mental development in adolescents is to search for self-identity. Adolescents spend more time and socialize with peers. Differences in values, physical appearance, perception, hopes and ideals are the background for the creation of several problems among adolescents. This causes adolescents to become victims of Bullying from other adolescents who feel superior. This study aims to describe the mental resilience of adolescents who are victims of Bullying. The study was conducted using a descriptive analytical method. The sampling technique in the study used total sampling with a sample size of 54 respondents. Most of the respondents were female, 34 people (62.96%); aged 16 years, 25 people (46.30%); and living with parents, 48 people (88.89%). Moderate bullying incidents were experienced by 27 respondents (50%) and adolescent victims of bullying had moderate mental resilience, namely 28 respondents (51.85%). Conclusion: Therapy is needed in subsequent studies to overcome the mental condition of adolescent victims of bullying.

Keywords: *Bullying victims; adolescents; mental resilience*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an incident that is often unavoidable, especially in schools. Bullying is the use of power or strength to hurt a person or group, a behavior that threatens, oppresses, and makes others feel uncomfortable (Repo, 2015). A person can be said to be a victim if he or she is treated negatively (intentionally causing injury or discomfort through physical contact, through words or in other ways) with a period of time once or many times or even often or becomes a pattern by one or more people.

Bullying is often seen as forms of behavior in the form of coercion or attempts to physically or psychologically harm a person or group that is 'weaker' by a person or group of people who perceive themselves as 'stronger'. This act of coercion or harm occurs within a group, for example a group of students in one school. According to the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), in a period of 9 years, from 2011 to 2019, there were 37,381 complaints of violence against children. For bullying both in education and social media, the figure reached 2,473 reports and the trend continues to increase.

SMA Islam Sultan Agung 3 Semarang is a private school and a target for junior high school

students to gain knowledge. However, since the implementation of the zoning system in accepting new students, it is no longer possible to select and filter students based on high academic achievement. Because the school accepts students through residential zoning and only a small number of students with academic achievement can be accepted. This high diversity can trigger different feelings between students so that indirectly they will form groups with friends who are not much different socially, economically, in achievement or culturally. This condition will exacerbate the differences between them, feeling better than other groups or feeling minority. Of course, this will create an atmosphere that is not conducive to the social interaction of students who are entering adolescence, where currently in accordance with Erickson's developmental stages, the task of adolescent development is to find identity.

The results of Febriana's study (2018) showed that in Semarang City, bullying behavior was quite high and 42% of victims were identified with various levels and types. One of the impacts identified and measured at that time was anxiety, which was 78% and severe anxiety as much as 30%. The results of the current survey show that 25 people experienced moderate and severe bullying. Of that number, 45% became victims of bullying with various impacts, namely declining achievement, reluctance to go to school, poor interaction between friends, prolonged sadness, and difficulty concentrating. The results of interviews with the principal also further confirmed that the most noticeable impact of bullying was declining achievement and concentration in learning. The most common type of bullying is verbal bullying, namely by calling parents' names or distorting the names of students who are considered strange. Another type is social bullying, namely refusing to be friends with those outside their group or damaging group relationships due to gossip or slander. In addition, there were incidents of physical bullying between students, namely hitting each other because of teasing.

Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted by Rochmawati (2023) for two months through observation and interviews, at SMA Islam Sultan Agung 3 Semarang, it was found that 8 out of 10 students experienced bullying at school. Some of them had further consequences in the form of not wanting to go to school, not wanting to socialize, withdrawing from friends, getting angry, and declining learning achievement.

If the condition is allowed to continue, the negative impact will be stronger so that effective mental defense capabilities are needed for the individual victims of bullying. Mental resilience is a universal ability where with this capacity, individuals, groups or communities are able to prevent or minimize the effects that can be damaging when they experience disaster or misfortune (Grotberg, 2004).

This study aims to describe the mental resilience of adolescents who are victims of bullying. The results obtained can be used as basic data for implementing subsequent research and as a basis for implementing appropriate therapy to strengthen the mentality of adolescents who are victims of bullying. Providing correct and targeted psychotherapy can help adolescents continue to achieve healthy mental development even though they experience a developmental crisis due to the bullying they experience.

METHOD

This study is a quantitative study that describes the mental resilience of adolescent victims of bullying. This study uses a descriptive analytical approach, which describes or provides an overview of respondents through data that has been collected without analyzing to make conclusions that apply generally (Sugiyono, 2013). The respondents of the study were students of SMA Islam Sultan Agung 3 Semarang in grades X and XI who were victims of bullying. The research sample was taken using a total sampling technique of 54 students.

The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains demographic data and mental resilience. The questionnaire was distributed and filled out by respondents directly. The demographic questionnaire contains the identity of the adolescents including name, gender, age, class, residential information, religion, and bullying incidents. The mental resilience questionnaire developed by Wagnild and Young (1987) consists of 14 questions, including self-ability (*meaningfulness* 3 statements; *perseverance* 3 statements; and *self-reliance* 4 statements) and self-acceptance (*existential aloneness* 2 statements; and *equanimity* 2 statements). The mental resilience questionnaire was assessed by giving a score of 7 (strongly agree); 6 (agree); 5 (fairly agree); 4 (neutral/so-so); 3 (less agree); 2 (disagree); and 1 (strongly disagree). The assessment categories were in the score range of 14-98, in which the score value of 14-42 was in the low category; the score range of 43-70 was in the moderate category; and the score range of 71-98 was in the high category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. Frequency distribution of respondents by gender, age and place of residence (N = 54)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	20	37.04
Female	34	62.96
Total	54	100
Age		
16	25	46.30
17	22	40.74
18	7	12.96
Total	54	100
Residence		
Living with Parents	48	88.89
<i>Pesantren</i>	6	11.11
Total	54	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were female, totaling 34 people (62.96%); 25 people (46.30%) were in grade 10; and 48 people (88.89%) were living with their parents.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents based on bullying actions (N=54)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Bullying actions		
Low	21	38.89
Moderate	27	50
High	6	11.11
Total	54	100

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents experienced moderate bullying, namely 27 students (50%).

Table 3. Frequency distribution of respondents based on Mental Resilience of Adolescents (N=54)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Mental Resilience of Adolescents		
Low	7	12.96
Moderate	28	51.85
High	19	35.19
Total	54	100

Meanwhile, Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents have moderate mental resilience, totaling 28 people (51.85%).

Discussion

Gender

The gender of respondents based on the research results was mostly female, namely 34 people with a percentage of 62.96%.

Bullying victims experienced by women in this study tended to be in a subtle and indirect way (female respondents received verbal bullying that attacked the psyche) such as slander, spreading rumors, manipulating friendships, and creating gaps in groups. This is different from bullying experienced by male respondents which tended to be done by means of physical intimidation (Dewi, 2016). Differences in bullying behavior reviewed from gender showed that gender did not affect the occurrence of bullying behavior (Fatmawati & Uyun, 2016). This study proves that there is no difference in bullying behavior between men and women.

Based on research results, the level of bullying among female adolescents is higher than that of male adolescents. This can be seen in the research results which show that there are more female respondents than male respondents.

Age

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents were aged 16 years, namely 25 people (46.30%).

Data from Plan International and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) states that 84% of children in Indonesia aged 12-17 years experience bullying, this figure is higher than other countries in the Asian region (Batla, 2014). Children who enter the age of 13-18 years are the time when children leave elementary school and enter secondary school (junior high school and high school). At this time, children want to play a role and be appreciated in their group. According to children at this age, good behavior is that which is pleasant and acceptable to their group (peers), the number of bullying cases is increasing and is a type of violence that often occurs in schools (Febriana, 2018).

According to the researcher, the large number of 16-year-old respondents who became victims of bullying was because the respondents were in grade X. The early grade level in high school which is a transition period from junior high school to high school and respondents are still adjusting to school conditions. 16-year-old teenagers who are middle adolescents where at that time they really need friends and are in a period of development marked by social interaction with peers so that the level of social interaction during adolescence is quite high. While there are 2 school levels above it, namely grade XI and grade XII which are the respondents' seniors.

Bullying Actions

The research shows that the majority of respondents experienced moderate bullying, namely 27 people (50%).

Bullying actions carried out by teenagers against their peers include mocking, spreading gossip, calling by other names, hurting verbally or in writing, isolating, intimidating, and even physically attacking (Sejiwa, 2023). Recent studies have found that bullies are always influenced by the consequences of their own behavior because bullying distorts individual relationships in groups (Cascardi et al., 2014). There are several reasons why someone bullies, including because the perpetrator feels lonely so he looks for something to do by bullying his friends who are considered weak and have no defense in defending themselves (Febriana, 2016). The consequences of the bullying incident itself make individuals, especially the perpetrators, have negative effects such as increased aggression and physical violence (Sari, 2016). In addition, other studies have also shown that bullies have psychological symptoms as a consequence of their bullying, namely anxiety.

Based on the results of the study that the high incidence of bullying among teenagers is due to lack of attention from parents and most of them need recognition in finding their identity. The lack of openness in communicating in the family affects teenagers in solving problems and making decisions so that they vent through violence against peers.

Mental Resilience of Adolescents

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents had a moderate level of resilience, namely 28 people (51.85%).

If a teenager has low resilience in him/herself, automatically the teenager is easily depressed by the impact of bullying (Silvia, 2018). Teenagers need support from the most important people in their lives who live around them. This is reinforced by research on adolescent resilience conducted by Ungar et al. (2014) and Julia et al. (2015) that support from family, friends, school, and the environment greatly influences the resilience and mental health of individuals who experience bullying.

During adolescence, a person tends to prefer interacting with peers, and tries to make adjustments to their environment in order to be accepted by their environment and not experience rejection from their environment. In addition, adolescents spend more time outside the home, namely at school, with peers, so that adolescent interaction and socialization are very intense, allowing for inequality with other adolescents and opening up opportunities for bullying. Mental defense is needed to fight and protect oneself from bullying by peers so that the body does not experience a decline in mental function.

Mental resilience of victims of bullying at school is the resilience of individuals (students) to the intimidation they receive. Students who can survive have defenses within themselves and have positive developments despite receiving bad treatment from their friends. Mental resilience for adolescents is one way to survive the pressures of life (Frutos & Vicens, 2014). A similar thing was expressed by Romeo (2015) that adolescents who experience negative events in their lives will be more resilient when facing the same experience when they enter adulthood. Meanwhile, Dewi and Cahyani (2015) added why mental resilience is important for adolescents is because adolescents who have adequate mental resilience will grow into resilient adults. Adolescents who do not have mental resilience will find it difficult to recover from their problems and will not be able to control themselves.

CONCLUSION

The majority of respondents were female, aged 16 years, and lived with both parents. The majority of respondents experienced moderate bullying. The mental resilience of adolescents was mostly in the moderate category. Bullying victims experience conditions that require proper treatment. Health workers should pay more attention to the mental aspects of bullying victims to avoid

further worsening conditions. The positive role of peers, a supportive environment and especially family are very much needed and useful for the mental stability of adolescent victims of bullying. This study can be used as basic data for further research that adds more insight and research can be conducted using mental resilience variables linked to other variables. Research on therapy that can be given to bullying victims to improve mental resilience or mental defense management in dealing with bullying can also be conducted next.

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