Empirical Analysis on Coping Strategy and Psychological Impact of Bullying Victim at School

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Abstract: Bullying in Indonesia is on the rise. Mocking, sneering and harassing may seem trivial and natural. But in reality, it is slowly but surely ruins a person. Bullying is a long-standing behaviour that can threaten all aspects of life for most children and adolescents at school, home and in their environment. One characteristic of bullying victims is unable to resist or defend themselves. This happens because of the weak coping strategies that affect victim's psychological condition. The purpose of this research is to understand the coping strategy and psychological impact of bullying victim. This research utilizes qualitative descriptive study approach. Subjects are consisted of three early adolescents who were victims of bullying. Subjects were selected based on a survey at a school. Data are collected by using semi-structured interviews. Test validity is done by using triangulation test from sources such as teachers, friends and parents. The results of the study conclude that the coping strategies and psychological impacts on three subjects studied are almost identical that they are more emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. The three subjects use avoidance strategy, distancing or resignation as if by nothing happened and seeking social support. Finally, the psychological impact of the subjects is similar in three aspects affective aspects: feelings of anger, sadness, embarrassment, anxiety and low self-esteem, cognitive aspects: it becomes difficult to concentrate during the learning process and decreasing academic achievements and behavioural aspects: rejected by their friends in school because of low self esteem.

Key words: Coping strategy, bullying, psychological impact, psychological impact, concentrate, embarrassment, identical

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, violence has been the usual feature of school life, along with its causes contained within the social, cultural, historical context of that period. Those affected by violence may include individuals or objects of the school itself and the nature of the damage may be psychological, physical or material. In the mid-twentieth century, however, violence against children was seen as a violation of their basic rights, especially, the right to physical safety and psychological security and prosperity (Cowie and Jenifer, 2009). Ridicule, mocking or sneering may seem trivial and look reasonable. But in fact it is slowly but surely can ruin children. Such negative actions are considered as a verbal bullying. Bullying is a long-standing behaviour that can threaten all aspects of life for most children and adolescents at school, home and in their environment.

Rivers et al. (2009) states that bullying has become a student's daily activity at school where about 20% of

students report that there is a bullying behaviour in their schools, 34% of students are reported being victimized and 63% of students see their friends bullying in school. In addition, bullying behaviours not only have a negative impact on victims but also on students who witnessed bullying (bystander) thus overall it has a significant negative impact on mental health of students.

According to Astuti (2008), it is difficult to find matching words for bullying in Indonesian. The real meaning is the emphasis of a group of stronger, more senior, larger and in greater number, against some weaker, smaller, more junior people. The emphasis leads to extortion (asking for money or material) but it can also be in another form by ordering the victim by doing something that the victim does not like at all. One of the characteristics of bullying is that it does not happen once or twice but it is continues even down from one generation to the next, so that, it becomes a habit of the group.

Researchers have been done to identify and prevent the occurrence of bullying in schools. Rivers *et al.* (2009) states that bullying has become a student's daily activity at school where about 20% of students report that there is a bullying behaviour in their schools, 34% of students are reported being victimized and 63% of students see their friends bullying in school. In addition, bullying behaviours not only have a negative impact on victims but also on students who witnessed bullying (by Stander), thus, overall it has a significant negative impact on mental health of students. A study conducted by Chandra and Mulya (2009) describes that the bullying behaviour of high school students in Surabaya by taking samples of 765 students. The results mention that 48.2% of students claimed to have been the victims of bullying and 45.1% of students had been a bully. Victims reported that 35.9% bullying occurred in the classroom when there were no teachers and even during classes (30.2%).

Tattum (1997) on his studies regarding school environment, victims of bullying tend to have low concentrations, poor school performance and low self-esteem. Besag (1991) explains that the likelihood of the demonization of the bullying victims. Frost concluded that they tend to be awkward due to appearance, lack of friends, easily irritated or easily overwhelmed. Appearance wise, Olweus (1993), found that a oversimplified explanation is somewhat different from the reality that certain children potentially become bullying victims. Olweus (1993) concluded that children are not specially targeted for bullying just because of their different physiology (e.g., wearing glasses, having language or dialects differences, being overweight or having unusual facial expressions, gestures or dressing)

but bullying may use some peculiarities that exist in the potential victims as an excuse. Talking about bullying is of course cannot be separated from the victims. Victims of bullying are closely related to their coping strategies. One of bullying victim's characteristics is unable to resist or defend themselves against bully's actions. It is also caused by the weakness on the way they handle the problem (coping strategy). According Lazarus and Folkman (1984) coping is a way to overcome the situation or problem that is considered as a challenge, injustice, harm or a threat. Coping strategies refer to various efforts, both mental and behavioural, to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize a stressful situation or event. In other words, coping strategy is a process where individuals try to handle and master stressful situations and suppress the consequences and problems that are faced by making changes in cognitive and behaviour aspects in order to obtain a sense of security. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) two coping strategies are typically used by individuals, namely: problem-solving focused coping, where individuals are actively seeking solutions from problems to eliminate stressful conditions or situations and emotion-focused coping, in which the individual attempts to regulate his emotions in order to adapt to the impacts that would be incurred by a stressful condition or situation. The results prove that individuals use both ways to overcome various pressing problems in various spheres of everyday life. Factors that determine which strategy is the most or often used highly depends on the personality of a person and the extent of stress level of a conditions or problems experienced.

Based on the results of a preliminary survey conducted by researchers on some students who become bullying victims in junior high school in Palu city indicates that the use of coping strategies that are less precise actually further exacerbate the behaviour of bullying itself, especially, to students who have long been bullied. Victims will continue to get bullied, especially, in schools. Therefore, the proper use of coping strategies for bullying victims is important because it can have an effect on helping victims to stop or free themselves from the bullying behaviour. Thus, this study aims to determine coping strategies and the psychological impact of victims of bullying.

Literature review
Bullying: Tattum (1997) stated that bullying is consciously and deliberately harm others and make the victims depressed. Coloroso (2007) argued that bullying or so-called oppression is an intimidation by a stronger party against a weaker party. Oppression can take many forms. It is also stated that bullying is a form of

oppression by conscious, deliberate and cruel activity intended to harm or instil fear through threats of further aggression, thus creating terror. Salmivalli (2010) states that bullying is an aggressive behaviour in which an individual or group of people repeatedly attacks, humiliates or excludes a helpless person. Padgett and Notar (2013) also describes the definition of bullying as aggressive behaviour intentionally and repeatedly with a view to violence and generally done by the person in charge of the victim in a permissive environment.

Sukarno and Handarini (2016) conducted a study to know the definitions of bullying. The results show that there are three categories of bullying bullying is a behaviour that is mostly done in school bullying greatly affects feelings and there are various forms of bullying. The adolescents or teenagers define bullying as a behaviour done by perpetrators that are meant to hurt someone. Sukarno and Handarini (2016) also recommend researchers to design an educational program and anti-bullying prevention. Bullying is an antisocial behaviour that often occurs in the educational environment for many years and becomes an integral part of human and socio-cultural ties.

Efobi and Nwokolo (2014) states that there are three elements underlying the occurrence of bullying behaviour intention to harm others power imbalance where bullying takes place between strong and weak individuals and repetition. There are several factors in each individual that make them bullying perpetrators, namely) sex and age aggressiveness school achievement personality and Impulsivity and low empathy (Farrington and Baldry, 2010). Berger and Caravita (2016) revealed that the motive of bullying perpetrators among teenagers is to achieve their goals and to be highly regarded by their friends. Bully does not have good social skills, so, they engage in bullying to gain social acceptance from peers and to achieve high social status.

Migliaccio and Raskauskas (2013) describes that bullying consists of several forms, namely, physical bullying (hitting, kicking, punching, pushing and so on), verbal bullying (nicknames, mocking, teasing and so on), psychological bullying (spreading rumours/gossip, exclusion and so on), possession destruction (damage to personal belongings or doing something destructive, eliminating or forcibly taking other people's goods) and technological bullying (violence via text messages or social media).

Coping strategy: Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Lazarus (1985) describe coping as a process where individuals try to manage the distance between demands (both individual and environmental demands) with the resources they use in dealing with stressful situations. Lestari and Lestari (2005) also argue that coping is an intrapsychic-oriented effort to control or dominate, accept, weaken and minimize environmental influences, internal demands and conflicts occurred if the conflict goes beyond one's ability. Based on the experts opinion above, it can be concluded that the definition of coping is any attempt, behaviour or mind conscious made by individuals to overcome the problems they face.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in general, coping itself has 2 kinds of functions, namely Emotion-focused coping which is used to regulate emotional responses to stress. This arrangement is done through individual behaviour such as alcohol use or negating unpleasant facts, through cognitive strategies. If the individual is unable to improve from a stressful condition, then the individual will tend to regulate his emotions. Aspects included in emotion-focused coping are as follows: seeking social emotional support, distancing, escape avoidance, self-control, accepting responsibility and positive reappraisal. Problem-focused coping which is used to reduce the stress. The individual will cope with learning new ways or skills. Individuals will tend to use this strategy, if they believe they can change the situation. The method or function of this problem is more often used by adults. Aspects included in problem-focused coping include problem solving, confrontation coping and social support.

Folkman (1984) also proposes a problem-focused coping strategy that consists of active efforts to change, deflect or in some way manage the stress itself through direct action. The coping strategies that focus on the problem include: confronting and problem solving. Seeking social support can also be included in emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping, depends on whether the emotional support is trying to reduce sadness (looking for someone just to hear the problem) or finding solutions to solve problems (not only seek suggestions but also follow the suggestions). Forms of problem-focused coping, among others confronting which are defending one's will trying to find a responsible person who can change his mindset, expressing his anger to the problem maker, ignoring the feelings, taking the opportunity or do something risky and doing something unthinkable. Problem solving including, know what to be done, making plans and implement it, concentrating on what to do next, turn the problem into something better and use several different solutions to solve the problem. Coping researchers also apply coping in the form of avoidance coping, a type of coping that includes problem-focused and emotion-focused coping aspects. The essence of coping in the form of evasion is to

consciously deny that there are problems to overcome or refusing to do something to overcome the problem or to give up (Davidson *et al.*, 2006). According to Rutter, the most effective coping strategy is depends on what best suits the type of stress and situation. Meanwhile, according to Taylor, the success of coping depend on merging coping strategies that match the characteristics of each stressful events, rather than finding one of the most successful coping strategies (Smet, 1994).

Psychological effects of bullying victims: Several studies have suggested that individuals, who are bullying victims are identified to have characteristics such as depressed, passive, having excessive shyness (Beran and Shapiro, 2005), trauma and withdrawal from their social environment (Carney, 2008). In addition to causing negative impacts on victims, bullying perpetrators are also at risk for becoming individuals with anger issues and depression, indicated to engage in criminal behaviour in adulthood and tend to have no empathy (Hawker and Boulton, 2000).

Coloroso (2007) explained that the feelings of guilt, shame and failure felt by the victims for not being able to face the brutal violence directed at them will make their feelings slowly ruined. As the victims become increasingly isolated from their friends, they also finds it difficult to concentrate on schoolwork and even the victims are focused more on developing strategies to save their lives instead of social skills, thus, the lives of the victims will change radically.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Subjects in this study are junior high school students who experienced repeated acts of violence by the perpetrators who have power. Selection of subjects is based on survey results done to schools through interviews with teachers and friends of the subjects.

According to Moleong (2014), one characteristic of qualitative research data collected is characterized by descriptive statements. Then in this qualitative research, the researcher use qualitative methods in form of interviews and documents review. In line with the above description, the data collection method used in this study is interview.

Interview is the main way of digging information in qualitative research. According to Moleong (2014) interviews are conversations with a specific purpose. The conversation was conducted by two parties, namely the interviewer, who asked questions and interviewee, who provide answers to the question. The purpose of the interview is to deeply understand the events, feelings,

motivations and demands on what the subject feels. Furthermore, the type of interview that will be used by researchers is semi-structured interview. According to Sugiyono (2012), the type of semi structured interviews are included in the category of in-depth interview where the implementation is more free when compared with structured interviews. The purpose of this interview is to find the problem more openly, in which the interviewed parties were asked for opinions and ideas. When conducting interviews, the researcher needs to listen carefully and record what the informant has to say, including teachers and friends of the subjects. The purpose of using interview in this research is to know coping strategy and psychological impact of bullying victims.

Analysis data: Qualitative data analysis by Moleong (2014) is an effort done by working with data, organizing data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching and finding patterns, finding what is important and what is learned and deciding what can be told to others. Data analysis in this research is done by arranging the data that have been obtained, compiled and studied according to the subject's story. In general, the description of data analysis activities is done by the following steps data presentation, i.e., data presented in the form of a brief description or presentation of data with narrative text data reduction. Data obtained from the field is summarized, choose the main points and focused on the important things then looking for the theme and pattern. Summarization and verification results from data reduction then followed by verification or testing of research findings. Data are validated where the validity of the data used is tested using the degree of confidence (credibility) that is done by means of triangulation, before the data from the research results are described and analyzed. Triangulation is a technique of checking the validity of data that utilizes something other than data for comparison (Moleong, 2014). In this research, the validity test is done by examining the triangulation technique of the source that is comparing and checking the degree of confidence of the information that has been obtained, through the homeroom teacher and the classmates of the subjects with the aim that the resulting data is objective and valid.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 is the research results description. Based on the results of research and analysis done to the data, it is known that coping strategies and psychological impacts on three subjects studied, in general are almost the same.

Table 1: Research results description

Subjects	Coping strategy		Psychological effect	
	Data description (situation and behaviour shown)	Interpretation	Data description (situation and behaviour shown)	Interpretation
FF	Closing the ears When humiliated, subjects choose to avoid	Distancing Escape Avoidance	When the subject is insulted by the bully, the subject feels angry and wants to get revenge but it only done twice by the subject. In addition, the subject is also embarrassed because the subject is often insulted by using nicknames as (insane person) and (demented person) whereas the subject wants to live normal like other friends. The subject also does not have many friends as the subject is ostracized by classmates	Subjects are affected by some psychological aspects such as: on the cognitive aspect: the subject feels that he or she is abnormal or has a deficiency but it does not make the academic achievement of the subject declining Affective aspects: the subject is angry because the subject is often harshly treated by the perpetrator group. In addition the subject was also embarrassed because often mocked by classmates
R	When bullied subjects just accepted and be patient	Distancing	When humiliated by bullies, the subject felt sad, anxious, embarrassed, inferior, heartache and anger	Subjects are affected by some psychological aspects such as (only have two friends)
	When insulted by the perpetrator, the subject avoids and leaves the place even if the subject cannot bear to cry	Escape avoidance	Sometimes the subject cries because the subject cannot stand the insult of the bully. The subject also does not have many friends). Because the subject is becoming reluctant to go to school as the subject feels at peace at home. Therefore, the academic achievement of the subject is declining	Cognitive Having difficulty to concentrate with lessons. Subject feels uncomfortable at school, so, the academic achievement of the subject decreased. Subject feels calm while at home.
	The subject tells what the subject experienced to friends	Seeking-social support		Affective aspects: the subject feels angry, anxious, inferior, embarrassed and sad that the subject does not have many friends at school. The subject also felt heartbroken and cried because the subject is insulted by the bully Behavioural aspect: reluctant to go to school as far as want to quit school. Subject also be afraid to make friends
RA	The subject tries to be patient when the subject is insulted by the perpetrator	Distancing	When insulted by the perpetrator at school, the subject feels sad and embarrassed. No one wants to be friends with the subject, thus, making the subject feels inferior and depressed. The subjects also often cry when humiliated by the perpetrator. In order not to be insulted any longer by the perpetrator, the subject tries to dress more neatly and cleanly. But it is turned out to be futile because the subject is still being insulted by the perpetrator. Therefore, the subject becomes reluctant to go to school, so that, achievement academic is declining	Subjects are affected by some psychological aspects such as). The cognitive aspect: the subject feels that he/ she has the deficiency and the academic achievement of the subject decline because the subject is reluctant to go to school and the subject also having low self esteem and depressed
	When insulted, subject choose to avoid the bullies or be silent and cry the subject tells what the subject experienced to friends	Escape avoidance		Sometimes the subject wants to fight but the subject is afraid of the bullies Affective aspects: the subject feels sad and embarrassed because the

Table 1: Continue

		bully often insults the subject. One time when insulted, subject cried
The subject tells what the Seeking-social support subject experienced to friends	Seeking-social support	Behavioural aspect: the subject tries to dress more neatly and cleanly, so as not to be humiliated by the perpetrator but it is in vain because the subject is still insulted by the perpetrator. Therefore, the subject becomes reluctant to go to school

It turns out that all three subjects FF, R and RA have the same coping strategy that is escape avoidance. As seen in the three subjects, they prefer to avoid because it can reduce the pain, sadness, anger and shame of the subjects. Evading is included in emotion-focused coping as an escape or escape attempt by the individual from the situation or problem at hand. As Davidson *et al.* (2006) points out, the essence of coping in the form of evasion is to avoid admitting that there are problems to be overcome (distracting, denying) or refusing to do something to overcome the problem or to give up completely.

Santrock (2003) also argues that teenagers who prefer to use emotional-focused coping are easily depressed and stressed have more chronic stressors and have experienced more negative events in their life because in some cases this strategy cannot solve the problem. As avoidance coping strategy cannot be used to solve the problem, so that, sometimes rendering it to be ineffective, the strategy is used if the subject is completely unable to change the environment. As stated by Taylor *et al.* (2009), people who minimize or avoid stress seem to be able to cope effectively for short-term threats. However, if the threat is repetitive or long lasting, avoidance is not the right strategy. Stress will continue to appear even though the mind tries to forget it. Avoidance may not be able to overcome the possibility of future threats and make no effort to anticipate it. Subsequently, the three subjects experienced the same thing that is after they were humiliated their friends also avoid them. As a result the three subjects did not have many friends in school.

Actually all three subjects have also done problem-focused coping by doing active ways to overcome the problems they are experiencing, among others is seeking social support. Seeking social support is included in emotion-focused and problem-focused coping. Based on the data analysis that has been done when the subjects tells the problem to their friends or relatives and it does not change or reduce the problem, then the coping strategy that they implemented is emotion-focused coping. Whereas when they report the bully to the teacher, it is included in problem-focused coping because in that way it can at least reduce the intensity of the bully's insult to the three subjects. Although, the result is ineffective because the victims only report the incident once or twice and causing the perpetrator to continue to launch his attacks on all three subjects by continuing to insult the subjects, even with increasingly harsh insults, as they have reported the bullies to the teacher.

In general, the three subjects use emotion-focused coping strategies rather than problem-focused coping. So, the way the subjects done are not very effective because in solving problems they use more emotional-focused coping approach. Although, according to Peterson and Ding (Santrock, 2003) there are times when emotion-focused stress management strategies become adaptive strategies. Moreover, in this case the use of problem-focused coping is less effective because they do not involve the role of other figures in addition to teachers who have more authority figures, such as parents. Furthermore, coping strategies used by all three subjects also affect their psychology. The harsh behaviour has a negative impact on some of cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of the three subjects. In general, the most impact often felt by the three subjects is on emotions (affective aspects). FF subjects feel angry because FF is often insulted by the bullies. But the subject can only bury his anger, even at one time the subject once burst into anger to the perpetrator.

Furthermore, they feel embarrassed, anxious, sad, hurt and crushed because of frequent insults by the perpetrators, causing them difficulties to make friends. In line with this matter, Coloroso (2007) explained that the feelings of guilt, shame and failure felt by the victims for not being able to face the brutal violence directed at them will make their feelings slowly ruined. As the victims become increasingly isolated from their friends they also finds it difficult to concentrate on schoolwork and even

the victims are focused more on developing strategies to save their lives instead of social skills, thus, the lives of the victims will change radically.

In addition, the psychological impact that is also experienced by the three subjects is on the behaviour aspect. The subjects became reluctant to go to school, except the subject of FF. The subject of R and RA assumes that if they go to school they will continue to be insulted by the bullies. They try to avoid the perpetrators by skipping school as within a week R and RA there are days that they are skipping school. Besides, these three subjects tend to withdraw their classmates because they feel inferior, although, in their heart there is a desire to be included. In accordance with what Chaplin (2002) defines, withdrawal is a behavioural pattern that removes a person from obstruction or frustration, this withdrawal may be a habitual self-defence mechanism which includes a serious symptoms of resignation or withdrawal from reality. As suggested by Sejiwa (2008) bullying is a major obstacle for a child to self-actualize. Bullying does not provide a sense of security and comfort, making the victims afraid and intimidated have low self esteem and a sense of worthlessness, difficult to concentrate in studying, unable to socialize with the environment and ultimately reluctant to go to school. Whereas according to Majcherova *et al.* (2014) schools should be a safe and comfortable place for students. Bullying is a serious problem in Indonesian schools as well as in other countries.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the use of coping strategies and psychological impact on the three subjects studied is almost the same, the explanations are as follows: the use of coping strategies of all three subjects has a similarity that almost all strategies are more emotion focused coping, although, some also uses a problem focused coping strategy. The three subjects use avoidance strategy including distancing, that is resigned and as if nothing happened and social support by telling their problem to brother or friends. While in the problem-focused strategy, the three subjects used confrontation coping, an aggressive reaction to change circumstances which illustrates the degree of hatred and risk-taking and seeking-social support that is telling or reporting the incident to the teacher. The psychological impacts of the three subjects are similar on the affective aspects, the three subjects feel angry, sad, embarrassed, anxious and inferior because they do not have many friends at school. Besides having similarities, the three subjects also have different psychological impacts. In the cognitive aspect, the two subjects became difficult to concentrate on the lessons, so that, their academic achievement is declining. Furthermore, on the behaviour aspect both subjects also become reluctant to go to school as far as skipping school. This outcome is different for one subject as in the cognitive aspect he does not experience a decline in academic achievement but the subject realizes that the subject is abnormal or has flaws.

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