# FORGIVENESS TO VICTIMS OF BULLYING

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## ABSTRACT

Bullying behavior keeps haunting children and adolescents from time to time in Indonesia. Bullying cases frequently can be found as physical and non-physical. This cause invisible cycles that make these bullies become a constitute tradition which can't be stopped. The forgiveness of the victims is one the solutions which can be done that the bullying cycles can be stopped. The purpose of this observation is to discover the meaning of forgiveness that occurred by the subjects of their experience who had forgiven the bullies. The sort of this observation is qualitative observation with phenomenology studies. The participants are the victims of bullying who had forgiven the bullies. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The result of this observation shows that these victims who had forgiven the bullies, had achieved forgiving processes before they could forgave the bullies. Subject 1 experienced avoidance motivation or self-pulling from the transgressor (bullies), revenge motivations or the individual urge to respond the transgressor, having self-reflection of the transgression (bullies), benevolence motivations or the urge to have a good respond against the transgressor, and empathy. Subject 2 experienced avoidance motivations, benevolence motivations, self-reflection to the transgression, and empathy. Subject 3 experienced benevolence motivations, self-reflection to the transgression and empathy.

**Keywords:** Forgiveness, Victim-Bullying, Student.

## INTRODUCTION

School is the second place after home to gain experience and learn how to socialize well with peers, older or younger. However, what if the place that is expected to develop social soft skills turns into a place that is unsafe and full of threats? Olweus (in Smokowski, et al, 2005) said, in the last 30 years researchers have discovered that bullying is a serious threat to children's development and is a potential cause of violence in schools. Bullying in children is considered an early form of violence that occurs in adolescence, and can manifest in a form of serious behavioral disorder, for example anti-social behavior. A study conducted by Brockenbrough (in Smokowoski, et al, 2005) shows a relationship between bullying and violence. From nearly 1000 research subjects consisting of children in grades 6, 7 and 8, data was obtained that one third of the subjects who were victims of bullying displayed an aggressive nature. The group of victims who behave aggressively have a greater likelihood of bringing weapons to school, being involved in alcohol abuse, and getting involved in physical fights at school compared to other groups of victims (who are not aggressive) even when compared to the perpetrators of bullying themselves.

Bullying behavior continues to haunt Indonesian children from time to time. Cases of bullying that are often encountered are cases of seniority or the intimidation of senior students towards their juniors, both physically and non-physically. Bullying cases in Indonesia often occur in educational institutions. The five cases of bullying that were widely reported in the media were those that occurred at high schools in Jakarta, namely the bullying case at SMA 90 Jakarta, the

victim was forced to run and was slapped by a senior, then the case of Ade Fauzan, a grade 11 student who was the victim of violence from a grade 12 high school student. 82 Jakarta. Then there is Okke Budiman, a grade 11 student at SMA 46 Jakarta, who admitted that he was molested by his senior grade 12 student because he didn't want to lend him his motorbike. There was a case of bullying at SMA 70 Jakarta, a female student was scolded, hit and grabbed by three of her seniors until she had bruises just because she was not wearing an undershirt (singlet t-shirt). Then the last one was the bullying case that happened to Ary at Don Bosco Pondok Indah High School. Ary admitted that he was hit and burned with cigarettes by a senior at the high school.

Although the types of bullying used vary, the characteristics of the victims are unique. This distinctiveness comes from two factors, external and internal. External characteristics include the victim having an appearance or habits that are different from their daily behavior. Some are "chosen" because they are different sizes, for example their physique is smaller than others, they are overweight, or they are taller than most children. There are also some children who are targets of bullying because of a different ethnic, belief or cultural background than most children in the environment. There are also children who become victims of bullying because they have limited abilities, for example having difficulty reading or calculating.

Internal characteristics include children who have passive and submissive personality types. These children tend to be unable to defend themselves and their rights, even though they are not in a situation where they are targets of bullying. Another characteristic is that victims of bullying usually have anxiety, nervousness or insecurity. Victims also tend to be shy and quiet children. Victims of bullying tend to be children who have low self-esteem, and perhaps because of the victim's shy nature, the victim also tends to have few friends. Unfortunately, conditions of social isolation like this increasingly open up opportunities for victims to become targets of bullying (Murphy, 2009). These characteristics are the beginning of the plot of how people can become victims of bullying. If there is no forgiveness from the victims of bullying, it is very likely that these victims could become perpetrators too. Forgiveness becomes a "shield" for humans to avoid negative behavior.

There are several studies on the positive effects of forgiveness, including research that tries to find a relationship between forgiveness training and high blood pressure (hypertension). 25 participants were randomly selected and intervention was carried out in the form of forgiveness training for 8 weeks. The result was that most participants experienced a decrease in blood pressure and reduced anger (Alamsyah, 2008).

There was also a cohort study involving 259 participants. The intervention group was given 6 weeks of training on forgiveness using Dr. Lushkin from Stanford. Research results show that forgiveness training can be effective in reducing the use of anger as a way to deal with stress, reducing feelings of stress and physical symptoms of stress (Alamsyah, 2008).

Through forgiveness, victims of bullying will avoid revenge and retaliation for bullying behavior against others. Kaballu (2013), in his research on the meaning of forgiveness for victims of the Poso conflict, found that the victims tended to choose to forgive the perpetrators, the goal was to anticipate the emergence of revenge and create peace in the future for Poso residents. This illustrates how important it is for victims of bullying to be able to forgive the behavior of the bully when the perpetrator attacks them. Researchers are interested in making forgiveness the focus of research because researchers want to know what forgiveness means to victims who have experienced bullying.

The aim of this research is to understand the meaning of forgiveness experienced by the subject in his experience as a victim who has forgiven the perpetrator of the bullying.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

Researchers used qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. Moleong (2007) defines phenomenology as subjective experience or the study of consciousness from a person's primary perspective. Research subjects were obtained using a purposive sampling technique, namely samples or subjects that were relevant to the research objectives, with the criteria of having been a victim of bullying and having forgiven the perpetrator. Previously, researchers had conducted a preliminary survey with victims of bullying whether the victim had forgiven the perpetrator or not. The following is demographic information about the research subjects:

Table 1.

| Characteristics | Subject 1 (L) | Subject 2 (L) | Subject 3 (P) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 19 years old | 22 years | 22 years |
| Status | Student | Student | Student |
| Age begins to experience bullying | 16 years old 11 high school) | 7 years (3 elementary school) 12 years (7 junior high school) 15 years (10 high school) | 12 years (7 junior high school) 15 years (10 high school) 18 years (1st semester of college) |
| Bullying Period | High school: 1 year | Elementary school : 2 years Middle school : 1 year High school : 1 year | Middle school : 3 years High School : 3 years College : 2.5 years |
| Types of Bullying | Verbal, Relational and Physical. | Verbal and Physical (Elementary and Middle School) Verbal and Relational (Senior High School) | Relational (middle school and high school) Relational and mental or psychological bullying (college) |

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Parenting Experiences**

The relationship between father, mother and child certainly cannot be separated from the parenting style of the parents which will later influence the child's development. It is thought that each subject's parenting experience can influence the child's characteristics. According to Yatim and Irwanto (in Dariyo, 2011) explain that with democratic parenting, children are able to develop control over their own behavior with things that are acceptable to society. This encourages children to be able to stand up independently, be responsible and confident in themselves. Their creativity develops well because parents always stimulate their children to take the initiative.

Subjects 1 and 2 had a democratic parenting style from both parents. In contrast to subjects 1 and 2, subject 3 has an authoritarian parenting style. Hurlock (in Dariyo, 2011) said that children who are raised in an authoritarian parenting style will grow up to be indecisive, have weak personalities and are unable to make decisions about anything.

## Social Life

In social life, of course, conflict will always arise. Social conflict is a form of social interaction between one party and another party in society which is characterized by mutual threats, pressure, and even mutual destruction (Lauer, 2004).

The conflict that occurred in the three subjects was due to the perpetrators' dislike for each subject. This is in line with the opinion of Lauer (2004) who says that in its extreme form, conflict is carried out not only to maintain life and existence, but also aims to the extent of destroying the existence of other people or groups who are seen as opponents or rivals.

## Bullying Experience

One of the causes of bullying is because of school. Schools often ignore the existence of bullying, so that children as perpetrators of bullying will receive reinforcement for their behavior for bullying other children. Bullying is growing rapidly in the school environment, often providing negative feedback to students, for example in the form of unconstructive punishments that do not develop a sense of appreciation and respect among fellow school members. (Ariesto, in Mudjijanti 2011).

The bullying received by each subject is different. The bullying received by subject 1 took the form of verbal, physical and relational bullying. Subject 1 was mocked by the perpetrator and the perpetrator's friends, stopped from a distance and sometimes kicked, subject 1's assignment papers were also thrown away without subject 1's knowledge.

Subject 1 experienced these things for approximately a year, from grade 2 to grade 3. Subject 1's bullying started in high school, when the subject was still in an organization, namely the OSIS. The problem started when the OSIS secretary, a woman, ordered this and that to her subject division, causing the members of the subject division to be overwhelmed, exhausted and overworked. However, the subject and its members could not fight back because this woman was one of the influential people in her school.

Then, because he couldn't stand the woman's treatment, subject 1 mocked the woman through Chairil Anwar's poem, which had an animal theme. From this teasing, subject 1 was bullied by the female friends.

Subject 2 has experienced bullying since the 3rd grade of elementary school. However, subject 2 continued to experience bullying throughout his school years; Elementary, middle school, high school. In elementary school, the type of bullying that subject 2 received was verbal and physical bullying. Subject 2 was teased, subject 2's shoes were played with, subject 2's bag was hidden, subject 2's hands were pulled and subject 2's body was pushed. Subject 2 experienced bullying in elementary school for two years. The reason Subject 2 was bullied was because Subject 2 made a mistake, but the perpetrator did not forgive.

When he was in junior high school, the type of bullying that subject 2 received was verbal and physical bullying as well. Subject 2 experienced bullying for approximately a year. The reason was that subject 2 and the perpetrator liked the same woman, then a misunderstanding occurred between the two of them.

In high school, the type of bullying that subject 2 received was verbal and relational bullying. Subject 2 experienced bullying in high school for approximately a year. Subject 2 was ridiculed and isolated from social friendships in his class. The cause is exactly the same as what

happened in junior high school; Subject 2 and the perpetrator liked the same woman and a misunderstanding arose.

Subject 3 experienced bullying from middle school. Almost similar to subject 2, subject 3 also experienced bullying throughout his school years; middle school, high school, and college. In middle school, the type of bullying the subject received was relational bullying. Subject 3 was ostracized by his classmates. Subject 3 was bullied because others felt that subject 3 was very flirtatious with the boys at his school. His friends also think that subject 3 doesn't need friends because subject 3 already has people 'at the top' who can help him.

When he was in high school, the type of bullying that subject 3 received was also relational bullying with similar problems; because he is close to his older brother. When in college, the bullying received by subject 3 was in the form of relational bullying and mental or psychological bullying, with the same problems as the subject in middle school and high school; flirting with men.

**Experience in Forgiveness**
According to McCullough (2006), there are three processes in forgiveness; empathy toward transgressors, generous attributions and judgments, and self-reflection toward transgressors. Subject 1, subject 2 and subject 3 went through the stage of self-reflection regarding transgression. McCullough (2006) said, the more often people reflect on transgression, the higher the level of revenge and avoidance motivation that person carries out towards the transgressor.

However, this is the opposite of the findings that researchers found in the three subjects. Subject 1 stated that it took subject 1 two years to be able to forgive the perpetrator. During those two years, subject 1 introspected himself. It was not only the perpetrator's fault that subject 1 pondered, but also subject 1's fault. The results of this self-introspection made it easier for subject 1 to forgive the perpetrator.

Next, Subject 2, after experiencing three periods of bullying; namely elementary school, middle school and high school, subject 2 forgave all his perpetrators when he was in his second year of college. Subject 2 said that the number of times Subject 2 experienced bullying, sometimes this did not make it easier to resolve the problem, but instead reopened old wounds that had previously been forgiven, so that when the bullying happened again, Subject 2 needed time until the second year of college to reflect on oneself so that subject 2 can forgive all the perpetrators.

In contrast to subject 3, subject 3 only needed a month to reflect on himself and then be able to forgive the perpetrator.

McCullough (2006) said there are five factors that influence forgiveness behavior, one of which is empathy. The three subjects also went through an empathy process. Subject 1 said that subject 1 had placed his position on the perpetrator; that is, if subject 1 is teased that he looks like an animal, subject 1 will definitely be angry. Therefore, after going through a reflection process, subject 1 was able to forgive the perpetrator.

Another case with subject 2, subject 2 said that subject 2 had a desire to bully other people. However, because subject 2 knows how unpleasant it is to be a victim of bullying, subject 2 doesn't do that.

It was also different with subject 3. Subject 3 said that the bullying behavior carried out by the perpetrator towards subject 3 was only an outlet because the perpetrator was jealous of subject 3's harmonious life and family in the eyes of the perpetrator, unlike the perpetrator's family who had a broken home. This is what makes subject 3 empathize with the perpetrator; that perpetrators should not be retaliated against, but rather helped.

In essence, the three subjects experienced the same thing in their decision to forgive the perpetrator of the bullying, namely that there were dimensions and processes of forgiveness that were passed by the three subjects.

**CONCLUSION**
Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the research data, it can be concluded that the experience of a victim of bullying who has forgiven the perpetrator is not a simple experience. Researchers divided this experience into several mutually sustainable parts, namely the influence of parental care, social life, experiences of bullying and experiences of forgiveness. There are many things that influence a victim's ability to forgive their perpetrator, including self-reflection, empathy for the perpetrator, or experiences that trigger forgiveness itself. But in the end, forgiveness cannot occur without a strong will from the individual who wants to forgive. Individuals who have forgiven also take lessons from their past experiences and have a new outlook on life to be useful not only for themselves but also for the community around them.

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