STRESS COPING STRATEGIES AMONG ADOLESCENT VICTIMS OF BULLYING AT SMK NEGERI 1 KOTANOPAN

Jamilah Lubis[1]
Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan
jamilahlubis746@gmail.com

Asmaryadi[2]
Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan
asmaryadi@um-tapsel.ac.id

Erlina Harahap[3]
Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan
erlina.harahap@um-tapsel.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to identify the stress coping strategies used by adolescent victims of bullying at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan. Stress coping refers to actions or efforts made by individuals to reduce pressure or problems caused by stressful situations. This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The informants consisted of two students who had experienced bullying, a Guidance and Counseling teacher, homeroom teachers, and one student. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings revealed that the adolescent victims of bullying applied two types of stress coping strategies: emotional-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Emotional-focused coping was carried out through positive activities such as writing, listening to music, and participating in extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, problem-focused coping was implemented by directly confronting the perpetrators and seeking support from the Guidance and Counseling teacher. These strategies helped students manage stress, prevent more severe psychological impacts, and positively adapt to pressure while continuing to seek appropriate solutions in dealing with stress caused by bullying.

Keywords
Stress Coping, Adolescents, Bullying

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi *coping stres* yang digunakan oleh remaja korban *bullying* di SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan. *Coping stres* adalah suatu tindakan atau usaha yang dilakukan oleh individu dari suatu masalah dengan tujuan untuk mengurangi tekanan atau masalah yang disebabkan oleh tekanan-tekanan yang mengakibatkan stres pada individu. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Informan dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari dua orang siswa yang pernah mengalami *bullying*, guru Bimbingan dan Konseling, Wali

Kelas, dan satu siswa. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua remaja korban *bullying* menggunakan dua jenis strategi *coping stres*, yaitu strategi *emotional focused coping* dan *problem focused coping*. *Emotional focused coping* dilakukan dengan cara mengelola emosi melalui kegiatan positif seperti menulis, mendengarkan musik, dan mengikuti kegiatan ekstrakurikuler. Sementara itu, *problem focused coping* dilakukan dengan cara berusaha menyelesaikan masalah dengan menghadapi pelaku secara langsung, mencari dukungan ke guru BK. Kedua strategi ini membantu siswa dalam mengelola stres, mencegah dampak psikologis yang lebih berat, serta kemampuan untuk menyesuaikan diri secara positif dalam menghadapi tekanan dan tetap berusaha mencari solusi yang baik dalam menyikapi stres akibat *bullying*.

Kata Kunci
Coping stres, Remaja, Bullying

INTRODUCTION

School is a place where students gain knowledge about the world and learn to adapt to the progress and changes occurring in modern life. According to Law No. 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to create learning conditions and educational processes that enable students to actively develop their potential to possess spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

Schools play a significant role in educating younger generations. However, besides producing intelligent and capable individuals, schools may also become places where violence occurs, whether committed by teachers against students, students against teachers, or students against fellow students (Emi et al., 2021). Violent acts among students are increasingly common and alarming, one of which is bullying (Emi et al., 2021). Bullying, as a form of aggressive behavior, has become a global issue, including in Indonesia (Tumon, 2014).

Bullying is a social problem that frequently occurs both inside and outside school environments, particularly among adolescents. Bullying can be carried out physically, verbally, or through social media and may negatively affect victims' mental and emotional health. Bullying often arises as a consequence of declining character values influenced by modern developments. It may occur verbally or non-verbally.

According to Rigby, bullying is a desire to hurt another person. This act is usually performed directly by an individual or group with greater power, irresponsibly, repeatedly, and often with pleasure. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) defines bullying as long-term physical and psychological violence committed by an individual or group against someone unable to defend themselves. Bullying is an intentional act causing victims to feel afraid, threatened, or unhappy. Characteristics of bullying include aggressive behavior, intentional harm, repeated actions over a long period, and unequal power relationships (Olweus, 1993).

Research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 revealed that 41.1% of students in Indonesia admitted to having experienced bullying (Kompas.com, 2021). In Indonesia, bullying cases rank highest among public complaints

submitted to the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in the education sector, with at least 37,381 reports between 2011 and 2019. Of these cases, 2,473 reportedly occurred in educational settings (KPAI, 2021). Furthermore, in 2019, KPAI stated that bullying cases at junior high school level reached 22%, while at senior high school level they reached 39%.

These phenomena indicate that bullying is a serious issue requiring special attention due to its long-term psychological effects. One major negative impact is the disruption of adolescent mental health, including anxiety, social isolation, depression, and low self-esteem (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Santoso & Sugiarti, 2022). Bullying can result in physical injuries, feelings of insecurity, fear of attending school, emotional problems, social difficulties, depression, and even suicidal thoughts (Dalimunthe & Sinulingga, 2023).

Victims of bullying often feel uncomfortable in class, lose confidence, feel constantly intimidated, helpless, and worthless within their environment. As a result, victims may experience depression and stress.

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), stress is an emotional and mental disturbance caused by external tension. Lazarus explained that stress is a condition arising when individuals face internal and external situations perceived as threatening. Adolescents experiencing stress due to bullying are at risk of negative impacts on their daily lives.

Darney et al. (2013) found that individuals who experienced bullying during school years often suffered from stress and low self-esteem in adulthood. Therefore, efforts are needed to address these negative effects. In psychology, the process of managing stress is known as stress coping. According to Richard Lazarus (2013), stress coping involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies to manage stress and reduce its negative impact. Coon (2010) also stated that stress coping strategies are actions aimed at reducing stress and improving coping skills through cognitive and behavioral processes.

Stress coping is the process of managing mental and emotional pressure caused by various life situations and events. The purpose of stress coping is to reduce the negative effects of stress on physical and mental health, improve problem-solving abilities, and enhance quality of life. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) divided stress coping into two forms: problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping.

Based on preliminary observations and interviews with Mrs. NS, a Guidance and Counseling teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan, several students were identified as victims of bullying. Some students experienced ridicule and humiliation from classmates regarding their physical appearance, skin color, and style of dress. Negative comments were delivered directly and through social media, causing psychological pressure. Victims felt worthless, afraid to socialize, and tended to isolate themselves due to low self-confidence.

Other victims also experienced physical bullying, such as having their shirt collars pulled, being slapped excessively, or being hit on the shoulders unexpectedly. Although perpetrators considered these actions as jokes, they caused fear and emotional pain to victims. Consequently, victims experienced stress, anxiety, and depression that affected their mental health and academic achievement.

Based on these phenomena, the researcher became interested in studying the stress coping strategies used by adolescent victims of bullying at school under the title “Stress Coping Strategies Among Adolescent Victims of Bullying at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan.”

METHOD

This research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan, located in Kotanopan District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra. The study was carried out approximately two months after the research proposal seminar and after obtaining a research permit from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan.

This study used a qualitative research method. It is categorized as qualitative because the data obtained were descriptive in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior from the interviewees. According to Flick (2022), qualitative research is an approach using non-numerical data to understand and interpret social, cultural, or psychological phenomena.

The study used a descriptive qualitative approach conducted intensively, allowing the researcher to participate in the field, carefully record events, analyze documents reflectively, and produce detailed reports (Dela et al., 2023).

Informants in this study included Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and students, while the respondents consisted of two adolescent victims of bullying. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling, which selects participants based on specific criteria, namely adolescents who had experienced bullying.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Beginning of Bullying Experiences

Based on interviews with the respondents, respondent KU experienced bullying during the tenth grade. Several classmates mocked KU because of body shape, dark skin color, and simple clothing style. The comments were repeatedly made in front of others, causing embarrassment and emotional distress.

Respondent MA experienced physical bullying. Several classmates often pulled MA’s shirt collar and intentionally hit MA’s shoulders from behind. Initially, MA considered it a joke, but eventually realized that the actions were excessive and disturbing.

These findings support Olweus’ (1993) theory that bullying may occur physically, verbally, relationally, and digitally. Both respondents experienced emotional disturbances as a result of bullying.

2. Stress Coping Strategies

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping refers to individuals’ efforts to manage pressures exceeding their available resources. Stress coping is divided into problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping.

The interview results showed that respondent KU chose to remain silent and avoid confrontation out of fear and a desire not to worsen the situation. In contrast, respondent MA chose to confront the perpetrators directly despite initially remaining silent.

3. Factors Supporting Successful Stress Coping

Guidance and Counseling teachers played an important role in assisting bullying victims. Counseling sessions were conducted using persuasive approaches so students would feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Through counseling, students were encouraged to recognize their emotions, understand the sources of stress, and develop strategies to overcome them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding stress coping strategies among adolescent victims of bullying at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan, it can be concluded that the coping strategies used by bullying victims varied.

Respondent KU used emotional-focused coping by managing emotions through positive activities such as writing, listening to music, and participating in extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, respondent MA used problem-focused coping by confronting the perpetrators, reporting incidents to the Guidance and Counseling teacher, and distancing themselves from the perpetrators.

Several factors supported successful stress coping, including support from Guidance and Counseling teachers, self-awareness to seek appropriate solutions, and the ability to learn from bullying experiences to become stronger and more assertive individuals.

Therefore, adolescents at SMK Negeri 1 Kotanopan demonstrated the ability to manage stressors caused by bullying, regulate emotions, and survive emotionally through healthy coping strategies and proper support systems.

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