Teacher's Perspectives on School Bullying and Its Effects on Student's Mental and Emotional Well-being

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ABSTRACT

Backgrounds: *Bullying defines as aggressive behavior involving power imbalance and occur repeatedly within a certain period of time that places youth at risk. It is considered a public health problem. As bullying that happened in schools, then teachers are the one of main resource in efforts to prevent, or intervene in, bullying situations.*

Objectives: *This study exploring teacher's point of view as teacher-counselor about bullying phenomenon in their school and their interventions toward bullying issue.*

Methods: *This study used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. The samples were recruited by using purposive sampling. We obtained 7 participantsto join this study. The data were collected through interviews with semistructured interviews and analyzed using the content analysis technique.*

Results: *We identified 3 related themes, including: teacher perspective on (1) bullying awareness, (2) occurence of bullying in school and (3) teacher intervention to deal with bullying.*

Conclusions: *It is needed multidisciplinary profession to work together to deal with bullying in broader area not only within school but also family even community. also establish an integrated professional action can promote school-based interventions*

Keywords: *School Bullying; Teacher-Counselor; Mental-Emotional Well-Being.*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the phenomenon of bullying among student has got attention by researchers, the media, and policy makers are being noted. Based on UNICEF for Indonesia report in 2015, about 40 % children experienced bullying in school, 32 % got physical bullied and 72 % being witness of bullying (1). Bullying defines as aggressive behavior involving power imbalance and occur repeatedly within a certain period of time (2). Bullying behavior is phenomenon that places youth at risk and is a manifestation of their high-risk status (3). It is considered a public health problem. Bullies and their victims have been shown to have high risk of having mental health problem (4).

When bullying occurs in schools, learning process can be interfered which cause by an unsafe environment and it can cause behavioral and emotional difficulties (5). As bullying that happened in schools, then teachers and school personnel are key to any long-lasting intervention efforts. Teacher as counselor has great understanding and responsibility of the effectiveness of the program. Bullying prevention program shows that a teacher can engage by giving students opportunities to explore bullying and learn defensive bullying strategies in nonthreatening ways (6).

A study found that students reported that teacher involvement during bullying situation were effectively when the situation got critical (7). Therefore, the teacher as teacher counselor's perspective of bullying is important being understood. This study tried exploring teacher's point of view as teacher-counselor about bullying phenomenon in their school and their interventions toward bullying issue.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. The data were collected form July to August 2019. The population included teacher who has role as teacher-counselor in their school. The samples were recruited using a nonprobability sampling with purposive sampling technique. Seven participants were recruited based on the inclusion criteria, which included having work experience of more than 1 year as teacher-counselor and being a voluntary participation as evidenced by signing an informed consent prior to the study. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria those who refused to participate or expressed refusal to have next interview sessions. The data were analyzed using a content analysis technique, which included transcribing the interviews, determining meaning units to search for relationships between words, sentences or paragraphs, and performing data abstractions to form several themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seven participants were involved in this study. Two participants are from private school while five participants come from public school. This study revealed three themes, describing **the teacher pespective on bullying awareness, teacher perspective on occurence of bullying in the schools and teacher's intervention in school bullying.**

The Teacher Pespective on Bullying Awareness in School

The first theme was the teacher pespective on bullying awareness in school which consists of two sub themes; The teacher pespectives on bullying occurence in school *and* teacher perspective of student understanding on bullying.

The teacher pespectives on bullying occurence in school

All participants agreed that bullying is serious problem in Indonesia. Five participants expressed bullying is in moderate level seriousness in their schools. While two participants mentioned no cases within a year being reported so they concluded bullying in their school catagorized as light of seriousness.

> *"of course bullying is a serious issue in young generation. Though there is no cases of bullying at school within a year. Then it considers as minor issue.(P2)*

> *"the case that I consider quite serious was several years ago, parents came to school because the son got bullied by his friends (in a group of 4 students). The parents asked to investigate the issue."(P5)*

> *"In my opinion, bullying need to pay more attention from goverment. It seriously can affect student learning process. In our school, the bullying incident is moderate level. There cases less than five being reported to teacher counselor this year.."(P7)*

Student Understanding on Bullying

Participants mentioned students that bully are thought to not fully understand their actions and the effects that they have on others. Yet students' understanding about bullying concept is still poor.

"when we asked the student for their behavior the answers almost same that they don't mean it, it just for fun or jokes....Doesn't have intention to harm their friend.." (P1)

" their reason simply out of curiosity toward their friend who is quite, passive and being overly sensitive.." (P3)

"..When we asked student about definition of bullying the answer is hitting or punching others.." (P4)

"Sadly, even student who likely be a victim doesn't aware that she is a victim.." (P5)

The first sub theme showed how the seriousness of bullying issue in teacher point of view which can be concluded bullying that happened in their school in range light to moderate. The indicators to categorize by how many cases reported to teacher counselor. Previous study found , teachers compared to education support professionals were more likely to witness students being bullied, more likely to view bullying as a significant problem at their school, and were more likely to have students report bullying to them (8).

While the sub theme students knowledge of bullying issue only limited to physical type of bullying, characteristics students who got "picked up" because they are different or odd. They don't even know if they are bully or bullied. Research found student perceived victims as having low self-esteem, having no friend and being different (physically) while students perceived of bully as troublemaker, bad manner and always try to seek a trouble in class (9).

Occurrence of Bullying in School

This theme has two sub themes below which are bullying type and the effect of bullying on health status.

Bullying Type that Common Happened in School

The participants revealed that most of bullying type that happened in school was verbal bullying. Physical bullying and social bullying were considered rare. Verbal bullying such as name-calling, threatening and insulting were reportedly common. It supported by past research that has consistently found that verbal type of bullying less serious than physical bullying (7).

"...the boy was being called by his father's name and his job which is a parker in shopping center." (P1)

"she told that she was very upset over her classmates often made a joke on her mother's job who was selling snacks in front of our school gate..." (P2)

"the student was threatened by her male senior if she doesn't want to date him by spreading her embarrassed photo." (P7).

The Effect Bullying on Health Problem

The most of participants mentioned students who got bullied experience both physical and psycological problem but still in light level.

"He did not attend the class for several day without confirmation. When we visited his house, he said that he didn't wan to go to schol because he felt insecure when he was at school" (P1)

" Last month we got information from psychologist counselor in Public Health Care that our student might experience as a bullying victim because all the physical examination were done and none of illness can be found but she was still complaining feeling unwell..." (P3)

" A week ago, I just happened to witness students teasing their friend physical during breaktimr by playing her chair and the victim is crying".(P04)

"the student came to counseling room cried and told me that she got frustated, she is sad ang angry but unable to defend herself by telling her friend that she does't like being topic of their jokes"(P06)

Past study found that teachers were concern of physically type of bullying that has serious effect and easy to observe (10). In the present study, it can found that the teachers noticed that verbal bullying is more common in the occurrences of bullying. Similarly, a study related to teacher perceived of bullying in Pesantren that the most frequent form of

bullying is that teasing, mocking or name calling is occurring among students' interactions within the pesantren (11). The trend is changing that can be assumed that student are aware of school regulation of strict sanction about violence behavior. While verbal bullying is quite easy to do and it is not easy being detected and observed.

This present study found that students complains e.i crying, sad, angry as short effect of being bullied and manifestation most likely to be physiological effect of bullying such as feeling unwell. it supported by previous study that student who experiencing as victims had emotional impact and short and long-term psychological (12). In addition, the previous study mentioned Victims of bullying reported poor mental and physical health, more symptoms of anxiety, depression; feeling sad, being loneliness; vomiting; sleep disturbance; nightmares; body ache; a headache; abdominal pain, and frequent illnesses (12). Those complains can lead to other problems if doesn't get appropriate treatment. Depression and violence behavior are known as mediating factor between bullying and suicide (13). According to WHO, suicide is the one of the causes of death among student aged 15–29 (14). This study was conducted in middle schools where the students age around 13-15. Students who became victims here had light signs and symptoms of psychological effects. if those symptoms don't get appropriate treatment it may get worse and potentially leading to depression and suicidal attempt.

Teacher's Intervention to Deal With Bullying Occurrences in School

Regarding participants intervention, it revealed that as teacher counselors often use scoring method even though schools don't have specific policy or regulation in bullying. Participants also mentioned their strategies when they encounter bullying situation. We divided this theme into three sub themes; teacher intervention by referring school policy and teacher method when facing with bullying situation and barriers of implementing intervention.

Teacher Intervention By Reffering School Policy

"We do have home visit program for student who has certain problems i.e having sickness, absent from school for quite some times etc. we had one case, visiting student who didn't want to go to school because he got bullied by his friends. we identified the effect and gave motivation to continue attending school". (P1)

"We don't have specific policy regarding bullying behavior. We often use scoring method or give a point same as violation. The scoring various but depend whether it is same as light or severe violation. We record it onto student's journal and they can check their scores." (P5)

"Although scoring method is quite common adopted to deal with bullying behavior, it became a dilemma for us as teacher-counselor because we aren't in the right position to judge student by giving score" (P6)

Teacher method to deal with bullying situation

"I invite them one by one to go to counseling room then question them to get more understanding the core problem from both sides then I give a time for then to interact and express their concern regarding bullying behavior" (P3)

"I will intervene immediately when i found a bullying situation. I call students who involve both bully and victim separately, give them understanding and make them reconcile. Involving parents and other school personnel will be the last option" (P4)

"I personally doesn't like to involve parents to solve the problem because they might cause the situation more complicated..Of course they will defend their children. I prefer to solve by involving students" (P5)

"If it is still in light to moderate situation then I just work with student but if the situation is getting worse that I have to report it to school especially the headmaster and other administrator" (P6)

Barrier to implement intervention

"..Unfortunately, despite bullying matter is quite serious, we don't have certain policy about punishment.." (P1)

" it is rarely student who are bullied report to us, they may be afraid it getting worse, so it is not easy to react only by observation evidence without students complain" (P3)

"i work as teacher-counselor alone for the whole school. My responsibilities isn't only to

deal with students problems. Honestly, it is quite difficult to deal with bullying situation" (P5)

" most of the behavior happened outside of the school environment so it is not easy to monitor. Students are good behaved during the school hours because they aware of school regulation but once they walk off school gates, everything can be happened" (P7)

Based on participants answered on sub theme teacher intervention by reffering school policy, it showed that intervention by employing school policy is not enough to prevent bullying because it doesn't have certain or specific regulation regarding punishment or procedure to deal with both bully and victim.

Basically, the intervention by mediation is quite effective to reduce bullying problem. Because by having the mediation a bully student is able to know how the victim's feeling is. By knowing it, the bully can reflect himself and imagine if he were the victim. It is expected that the bully will stop bullying others after knowing the suffering of the victim.

A theory mentions five reactive approaches to intervene bullying behavior that have been applied in school; direct sanction, restorative practice, mediation, the support group method and the method of shared concern (15). According to the theory, in this present study, participants were likely to use restorative practice the followed by mediation approach which students identified as bullies are asked to join a meeting with the presence of a victim as well (15). Basically, the intervention by mediation is quite effective to reduce bullying problem. Because by having the mediation a bully student is able to know how the victim's feeling is. By knowing it, the bully can reflect himself and imagine if he were the victim. It is expected that the bully will stop bullying others after knowing the suffering of the victim.

As mentioned by previous study that mediation is quite effective intervention to reduce bullying problem. Because, it can give the perpetrator an understanding of victims feelings as bullied. It is expected that the bully will stop bullying after learning the suffering of victims by reflecting himself and imagine if he were the victim. As for the victim can express discomfort and helps them to defend themselves (11).

The findings showed that the barriers for implementing teacher intervention can be concluded such as within teacher themself, peer, the victim themself, school, and surrounding environment. Bullying as a complex social phenomenon which affected by many social variables surrounding the children such as; school, parents, peer, and community environments (16). To prevent and intervene bullying cannot be done by school or teacher counselor. It really needs an integration of school, students, teachers, parents even community to work together.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Results of the study indicated that teacher counselor awareness of bullying in their schools were moderate. While we found students understanding of bullying issue is still poor. Bullying type which common happened in middle schools was verbal bullying. The risk of health problem also presented as light signs and symptoms both physical and psychological. Teachers faced barriers that prevent them to implement intervention to bullying problem. It is needed multidisciplinary profession to work together to deal with bullying in broader area not only within school but also family even community.

Further study is needed to evaluate teacher counselor method dealing with bullying situation, perspective of school administrator, parents, community and cultural roles on bullying issue. We also suggest an integrated professional actions is established in order to promote school-based interventions, considering characteristics of individuals, family, school and the community, that can related to bullying manifestations in the school.

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