

A REVIEW ABOUT EMOTIONAL ABUSE ON CHILDREN

***Raudhatul Jannah, Lely Safrina**

Psychology Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Syiah Kuala,
Banda Aceh, Indonesia

*Email: raudhapsikologi@gmail.com

Abstract

Children can be difficult to deal with in certain circumstances which can cause stress for parents or caregivers. Inappropriate care that does not fulfill the rights of children, can turn to child emotional abuse. In 2016 there were 1000 cases of child abuse in Indonesia, but based on data from the Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI) emotional abuse was the least common type of abuse every year. Actually, this form of abuse in children is common but few know it and are rarely given intervention. On the other hand, emotional abuse is a type of abuse that can occur separately from other types of abuse and is still a little being studied. The purpose of this paper is to see an overview of the impact of child emotional abuse and the dynamics of the impact. This research was conducted using literary study by sorting out journals about child emotional abuse then analyzing them. From the results of the analysis, it can be seen that the effects of child emotional abuse are anxiety, antisocial behavior and delinquency, aggressive behavior, explicit and automatic negative self-associations, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, obesity, suicidal ideas, PTSD, depression, headaches, risky sexual behavior, bulimia nervosa, schizophrenia, self-inflicted injuries, ischaemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, insecure attachment, and dating abuse in adolescence.

Keywords: Children, Parenting, Child Emotional Abuse

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) noted that there were 1000 cases of abuse against children during the period of 2016 (Hendrian, 2016). Based on the details of child protection cluster case data from 2011 to 2016, there were 84 cases of children being victims of physical abuse such as abuse, beatings and fighting, 37 cases of psychological abuse such as threats and intimidation, and there were 120 cases of child victims of sexual abuse such as rape, molestation, and sodomy (KPAI, 2016).

Table 1. Data on children victims of abuse by KPAI in 2011-2016

Type of Abuse	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Physical	94	57	215	273	197	84
Emotional	35	16	74	41	58	37
Sexual	216	412	343	656	218	120
Total	345	485	632	1070	473	241

Source: Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), *data child protection cases based on cluster 2011-2016.*

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the highest cases of child abuse occurred in 2014 as many as 1070 cases and the lowest cases of child abuse occurred in 2016, which were 241 cases. Based on the three types of abuse presented in the table, it can be seen that emotional abuse is the least occurring abuse according to KPAI. Every year, data on emotional abuse is less when compared to other types of abuse.

There are four types of abuse that occur in children, namely physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect (Norman, et al., 2012). Emotional abuse is difficult to define because of the difference in parenting practice and various cultures, also an abuse of this type depends on the perception of the child, such as yelling at the child will be defined differently according to the culture that family owned (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010).

In general, cases of child abuse occur in the closest environment, such as at home. According to Van der Kolk (2007), at least 80% of cases of abuse against children were carried out by the parents of these children. He continued that abuse against children is not only very frequent but also has various crucial impacts on development and individual functioning.

Classen and Critten stated that emotional abuse in children can be a strong cause of abnormalities experienced by children when compared to physical abuse (Glaser, 2002). Individuals who have experienced emotional abuse in childhood can be predicted to have an insecure attachment that can cause difficulties in building relationships with others (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010) and have maladaptive coping (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Interestingly, Glaser (2002) states that the form of emotional abuse in children often occurs but few know it and usually rarely given intervention. Furthermore, she explained that emotional abuse often coincides with other forms of abuse, but emotional abuse is a separate form of abuse and has its own definition. Glaser also emphasized that emotional abuse is difficult to define so it is rarely investigated (Glaser, 2002). Besides that, the impact of emotional abuse is also still underestimated even though every form of abuse has a different and unique impact (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010). Based on several literature studies conducted by researchers, it was mentioned that emotional abuse is related to insecure attachment and can impact coping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional abuse is a childcare relationship characterized by a pattern of dangerous interactions, patterns of parenting behavior or repeated extreme events that are conveyed to children that they are worthless, imperfect, unloved, unwanted, in danger, or valuable only in meeting the needs of others (Glaser, 2002). Riggs (2010) said that the relationship between emotional abuse and adult insecure attachment begins with parenting with emotional abuse, which results in an insecure attachment in children. Then, she added that insecure attachment in children causes emotion and negative regulatory dysfunction of the model of self and or negative model of others, then both cause maladaptive coping strategies resulting in social dysfunction. Then, he said that social dysfunction poses problems in relationships with peers. Children with social dysfunction can also develop adult insecure attachment in adulthood that affects partner dysfunction so that they can repeat the cycle of nurturing with emotional abuse again (Riggs, 2010). Not only that, Riggs (2010) further explained that individuals with social dysfunction can also have psychological pressure that can also repeat the parenting cycle with emotional abuse. Poverty, caregiver psychopathological conditions, and caregivers' experience of caregivers are risk factors for abuse (Cicchetti & Toth, 2016).

Abuse on children associated with early life stress (ELS) which can develop into complex trauma and post-traumatic disorder (PTSD). The experience of interaction in the family is a very significant factor in the vulnerability of trauma followed by PTSD (Bagot, et al., 2007). Emotional trauma can cause PTSD (Bouton & Waddell, 2007). This can cause interference during the development of individuals such as cognitive disorders (Gould, et al., 2012). Meanwhile, Van der Kolk (2007) explained that the complex diagnosis of trauma is more appropriate to describe the condition and impact of child abuse compared to the diagnosis of PTSD.

Living experiences about childhood abuse, it is important to determine the pattern of individual attachment (Miculincer & Shaver, 2007). Riggs and Kaminski (2010) stated that individuals who experience emotional abuse have insecure adult attachment. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) say that individuals with insecure attachment are more often involved in a conflict and tend to adopt conflict resolution strategies that are maladaptive so that they experience problems in social interaction and problems in maintaining a balance of relationships with others. Besides, it also can cause significant risks in the form of behavioral problems, lack of social ability, inferiority, and some emotional disorders that can occur in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment influences an individual's perception of stress and how to deal with stress (Kolk, 2007).

METHOD

In this study, researchers used the literature study by searching all books or journals about the impact or dynamics of emotional abuse in children, then drawing conclusions from the essence of each book or journal. It takes time to find books or journals about emotional abuse alone because this form of abuse commonly occurs with another form of abuse. So in searching keywords, researchers also type the form of another abuse such as physical and emotional abuse instead of emotional abuse alone. Riggs and Kaminski (2010) said that the effects of emotional abuse is little being studied while each form of abuse has a different and unique effect.

There are many parts in children that still keep growing or developing such as their personality and brain. In this stage of growing or developing they need a secure environment and attachment to feel safe and loved so they can grow and developed optimally. Being in such a harsh situation or abuse can effects children in many ways not only psychologically but also their brain development. Goldsmith and Freyed (2005) stated that there are connections between emotional abuse and capacities of emotional awareness based on neuroanatomical and neuropsychological research. Furthermore, not only seldom to be given intervention emotional abuse cases also less in reported (Glasser, 2002; Goldsmith & Freyed, 2005). All those facts draw researchers attention to have emotional abuse as their topic for researching.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The appearances caused by emotional abuse are anxiety, antisocial behavior, delinquency, and aggressive behavior (Glaser, 2002). The results of a similar study were also stated by Novita and Margaretha (2012) which stated that emotional abuse correlated with juvenile delinquency tendencies and accounted for 28% of the causes of juvenile delinquency. It is also known that emotional abuse has a positive

correlation with the tendency of juvenile delinquency which means that the more forms of emotional abuse experienced by children, the greater the risk of the child being involved in juvenile delinquency. Likewise, if there are fewer forms of emotional abuse experienced by children, the less risk is the child is involved in juvenile delinquency. The relationship between emotional abuse and juvenile delinquency occurs because of the complex interactions between children and the environment, especially the family environment, which then interactions are emulated and used by children to interact with other environments. Other factors that support these findings are individual diversity factors such as personality and interaction with peers. Novita and Margaretha (2012) emphasize that various factors that support the correlation between emotional abuse and juvenile delinquency cannot be separated from the emergence of wearing behavior in adolescents.

The next impact is negative explicit and automatic self-associations (van Harmelen, et al., 2010). Both negative and automatic self-associations partially mediated self-associations depression symptoms and anxiety symptoms. Example of negative self-associations is like low self-worth which then increases negatively self-associations themselves. Only emotional abuse found to be a strong prediction of automatic self-depression and automatic self-anxiety. These results illustrate that emotional abuse increases negative explicit and automatic self-association and is associated with depression symptoms and anxiety symptoms.

Other impacts of emotional abuse are drug abuse, alcohol abuse, obesity, suicidal ideas, post-traumatic stress (PTSD), and depression (Shapero, et al., 2014). Individuals with a high degree of emotional abuse experience increased symptoms of depression. Based on the research done by Shapero, et al. (2014) found that although emotional abuse can occur simultaneously with other types of abuse, emotional abuse is a strong predictor of the occurrence of symptoms or diagnosis of depression. Repeated accumulation of exposure to stress can lead to depression.

On the other hand, headaches, risky sexual behavior, bulimia nervosa, schizophrenia, self-inflicted injuries, ischaemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes (Norman et al., 2012), hallucinations (Whitfield, et al., 2005), dating abuse in adolescents (Wekerle, et al., 2009), and insecure adult attachment (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010) also found to be the impact of emotional abuse.

CONCLUSIONS

There are still many cases of child abuse in Indonesia. However, this type of emotional abuse has the fewest number of cases each year when compared to other types of abuse. Meanwhile, based on the literature review it is known that emotional abuse can occur separately from other types of abuse, generally observed, rarely given intervention, and is still difficult to define so that there is little study. This makes crucial emotional abuse to be investigated because each form of abuse has different dynamics and impacts for each stage of development and individual functioning. After knowing these dynamics and impacts, it will be easier to understand and provide appropriate interventions for children or individuals who experience emotional abuse.

REFERENCES

- Bagot, R., Parent, C., Bredy, T. W., Zhang, T., Gratton, A., & Meaney, M. J. (2007). In A. L. J. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, & M. Barad (Eds.), *Understanding trauma integrating biological, clinical, and cultural perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bouton, M. E., & Waddell, J. (2007). In A. L. J. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, & M. Barad (Eds.), *Understanding trauma integrating biological, clinical, and cultural perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cicchetti, D., & Toth, S. L. (2016). Child maltreatment and developmental psychopathology: A multilevel perspective. In D. Cicchetti (Ed.), *Developmental Psychopathology, 3rd Ed.* (Vol. 3, Maladaptation and Psychopathology) (pp. 457-512). New York: Wiley. PMCID: PMC2948722
- Glaser, D. (2002). Emotional abuse and neglect (psychological maltreatment): A conceptual framework. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 26*, 697-714.
- Goldsmith, R. E., & Freyd, J. J. (2005). Awareness of emotional abuse. *Journal of Emotional Abuse, 5*(1), 95-123. https://doi.org/10.1300/J135v5n01_04.
- Gould, F., Clarke, J., Heim, C., Harvey, P. D., Majer, M., & Nameroff, C. B. (2012). The effects of child abuse and neglect on cognitive functioning in adulthood. *J. Psychiatr Res., 46*(4), 500-506.
- Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(3), 511-524.
- Hendrian, D. (2016, December 7). *Selama 2016, KPAI catat 1000 kasus kekerasan pada anak*. Retrieved from <http://www.kpai.go.id/berita/8194/>
- Heide, K. M., & Solomon, E. P. (2005). Biology, childhood trauma, and murderer: Rethinking justice. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 29*, 220-233.
- Krenke, I. S., & Beyers, W. (2005). Coping trajectories from adolescence to young adulthood: Links to attachment state of mind. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 15*(4), 561-582.
- Kim, J., & Cicchetti, D. (2010). Longitudinal pathways linking child maltreatment, emotion regulation, peer relations, and psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical Psychology Psychiatry, 51*(6), 706-716. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2009.02202.x>.
- Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI). (2016, Juli 17). *Data kasus berdasarkan klaster perlindungan anak 2011-2016*. Retrieved from <http://bankdata.kpai.go.id/tabulasi-data/data-kasus-per-tahun/data-kasus-berdasarkan-klaster-perlindungan-anak-2011-2016>
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2007). *Attachment in adulthood structure, dynamics, and change*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2012). An attachment perspective on psychopathology. *World Psychiatry, 11*, 11-15.
- Milner, J. S., Thomsen, C. J., Crouch, J. L., Rabenhorst, M. M., Martens, P. M., Dyslin, C. W., ... Merrill, L. L. (2010). Do trauma symptoms mediate the relationship between childhood physical abuse and adult child abuse risk? *Child Abuse and Neglect, 3*, 332-344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.07.017>
- Moylan, C. A., Herrenkohl, T. I., Sousa, C., Tajima, E. A., Herrenkohl, R. C., & Russo, M. J. (2010). The effects of child abuse and exposure to domestic abuse on adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. *Family Abuse, 25*(1), 53-63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-009-9269-9>.

- Norman, R. E., Byambaa, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J., & Vos, T. (2012). The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect : A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS Med.*, 9(11), e1001349. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001349>
- Novita, N. P., & Margaretha, R. (2012). Hubungan kekerasan emosional pada anak terhadap kecenderungan kenakalan remaja. *Jurnal Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental*, 1(2).
- Riggs, S A. (2010). Childhood emotional abuse and the attachment system across the life cycle: what theory and research tell us. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, 19, 5-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1092677090375968>
- Riggs, S. A., & Kaminski, P. (2010). Childhood emotional abuse, adult attachment, and depression as predictors of relational adjustment and psychological aggression. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, 19, 75-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926770903475976>
- Riggs, S. A., Cusimano, A. M., & Benson, K. M. (2011). Childhood emotional abuse and attachment processes in dyadic adjustment of dating couples. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(1), 126-138. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a001319>
- Shapero, B. G., Black, S. K., Liu, R. T., Klugman, J., Bender, R. E., Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2014). Stressful life events and depression symptoms: the effect of childhood emotional abuse on stress reactivity. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 70(3), 209-223. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22011>
- Van der Kolk, B. A. (2007). In A L. J. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, & M. Barad (Eds.), *Understanding trauma integrating biological, clinical, and cultural perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Harmelen, A. L., de Jong, P. J., Glashouwer, K. A., Spinhoven, P., Penninx, B. W. J. H., & Elzinga, B. M. (2010). Child abuse and negative explicit and automatic self-associations : the cognitive scars of emotional maltreatment. *Journal of Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2010.02.003>
- Wekerle, C., Leung, E., Wall, A. M., MacMillan, H., Boyle, M., Trocme, N., & Waechter, R. (2009). The contribution of childhood emotional abuse to teen dating abuse among child protective services-involved youth. *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33, 45-58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.12.006>
- Whitfield, C. L., Dube, S. R., Felitti, V. J., & Anda, R. F. (2005). Adverse childhood experiences and hallucinations. *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 29, 797-810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.01.004>