Analysis of Students’ Mental Health after Terror Cases in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Mental health is one important part to maintain in the learning process. The aim of this study was to analyze students’ mental health after the terror cases in Indonesia. This study applied a qualitative approach in the type of case study research. The informants interviewed in this study were teachers and educational figures, while the respondents of the questionnaire in this study were high school students. Those informants were people who live in areas of terrorism victims in Indonesia. The determination of informants and respondents in this study was based on purposive random sampling technique. The research data were collected by interview and questionnaire techniques. The data analysis technique used was data triangulation. The results showed that students’ mental health living in the victims of terrorism had decreased and it had an impact on disruption of the education system in the area. This can be seen from several indicators, namely emotional, behavioral, and psychological instability of students. This result clearly showed that students’ mental health had a serious impact in determining the sustainability of the education system.

INTRODUCTION

The learning process is principally not only limited to the transformation of knowledge between teachers and students, but it also promises an experience to shape the attitudes and skills of each individual.³,⁴ Broad knowledge, good personality, and individual creativity as citizens will be able to develop a nation.³,⁴ Each generation has different characteristics that make the learning process that they experience different and in accordance with their respective characteristics.⁵ For example, a generation born in the current era of technological development will require different treatment from previous generations where the use of technology will be very important to be involved in their learning process.⁶,⁷ However, aside from these differences, there is one thing that every generation will need equally in achieving self-stability, namely a sense of security and comfort when participating in the learning process.⁶,⁷

The hierarchy theory of needs developed by Maslow states that there are several individual needs that must be met to obtain their existence as an educated individual.⁸,⁹ This theory explains that there are 7 types of individual needs to get self-actualization, namely the need for physical aspects, safety, affection, appreciation, education, self-confidence, and self-actualization.¹⁰,¹¹ This research will emphasize on one of the needs that must be met from the 7 needs that have been mentioned, namely the need for a sense of security and comfort. A sense of security is needed by individuals in an effort to achieve self-existence through educational programs, even a sense of security is the second order that must be fulfilled in Maslow’s hierarchical theory of needs after physical needs.¹² Teachers, as students’ closest partners in the learning process, must have competences to be able to create a sense of security and comfort for students during the learning process so that learning can become effective.¹³ However, when external phenomena occur, such as floods, earthquakes, fires, and others, they can disturb the emotional stability of students to get a sense of security and comfort. Of course, this will make the learning process ineffective. The terror case that occurred in one of the cities in Indonesia; Sibolga city, is an example of how a phenomenon can damage the continuity of the learning process because the public does not feel safe and comfortable to carry out the learning process.

Terrorism is a principle that prioritizes violence to achieve certain interests.¹⁵ This principle comes from radical ideas that continue to be formed by certain groups.¹⁶,¹⁷ Indonesia is one of the countries that often gets terror cases, and this phenomenon often makes people feel wages become victims.¹⁸ This will certainly disrupt the emotional stability of the community which results in a lack of security and comfort in carrying out daily routines. For example, the terror case that occurred in Indonesia is the most recent terror case to occur in Indonesia which occurred in 2019. This case has disturbed the stability of education, economy, government, religious activities, health and other aspects due to disruption of the mental health of the people in the area.

Mental health is one of indicators of the psychological welfare and stability of an individual.¹⁹ Mental health consists of several types of individual conditions categorized into aspects of health, aspects of anxiety, aspects of stress, and aspects of depression.²⁰ In line with the previous opinion, Biddle and Asare (2011)²¹ state that a person’s mental health is said to be good if he can carry out his activities without any mental and psychological burdens that he experiences. Furthermore, the mental health referred to in this study is related to the emotional stability, physical health, attitude or behavior, and psychological stability of each student in carrying out daily activities, especially in following the learning process. When a student doesn’t feel these categories, the student is declared to have a mental health disorder. On the other hand, if a student feels or experiences symptoms from one of these categories, the students will experience mental health disorders.²²,²³
Terrorism cases often have negative effects on people’s lives\(^\text{24}\). Various studies have shown that the negative impact caused by terrorism in society is an economic impact\(^\text{25,26,27}\). In addition, terrorism also affects the government system in a country, and this is in line with research result conducted by Zakaria, Jun, and Ahmed (2019)\(^\text{28}\). This research is supported by research conducted by Ferdin (2011)\(^\text{29}\) which states that there is a negative impact of terrorism on the government system of a country. Another impact of terrorism that has been studied is the impact of social life\(^\text{30}\). However, there has not been detailed research on the impact of terrorism on the students’ mental health in participating in the learning process. Therefore, this research is to examine how the students’ mental health after their area is terrorized.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research applied a qualitative approach with the type of case study research. The case raised was the students’ mental health after the terror occurred. This research was carried out in the city of Sibolga, Indonesia, as the most recent area to receive bombs terror in Indonesia. The informants who were interviewed in this study were teachers and educational figures, while the questionnaire was given to 90 respondents of high school students in the city of Sibolga, Indonesia. The sampling technique used in determining research informants was purposive random sampling. Determining teachers and educational figures as research informants was based on consideration that they were the closest people to feel and experience the impact of bomb terror on the course of the educational process in the Sibolga city. Meanwhile, the determination of high school level students was based on the consideration that they were people who directly felt the impact of the bomb’s terror psychologically. In addition, students at the high school level were considered to have been able to optimize their thoughts to convey their psychological feelings.

The research data were obtained from interview and questionnaire techniques. Interviews were conducted to obtain the main data from teachers and educational figures, while the questionnaire was used as the main confirmation data in this study. The qualitative data obtained in this study were further processed by the Miles & Miles and Hubberman’s model of data triangulation technique\(^\text{31}\). The procedure for implementing this research generally consisted of (1) a preliminary study; (2) analysis of the problem and determining the direction of research; (3) data collection; (4) data analysis and processing; (5) drawing conclusions.

**RESULTS**

The research results showed that the students’ mental health after the terror case that happened in Sibolga city, Indonesia, got decreased. This can be seen from the data obtained in the study of 4 mental health indicators used in this study. The first indicator is emotional stability. Information obtained from the informants showed that students in Sibolga city area experienced several emotional stresses after the terror bomb incident. Furthermore, the informant explained that emotional distress could be seen from the trauma and excessive fear of the students about this incident which resulted in the difficulty of educational institutions to carry out the learning process. Another characteristic that can be monitored from the unstable emotional state of students was that the students’ moods were very volatile, for example they were currently happy, a few moments later they might be sad or angry. This showed that the emotional condition of the students was unstable. Information obtained from local government figures stated that the trauma and fear experienced by students made Sibolga city government take a policy to close schools for safety and security reasons. The data from the interviews were supported by data obtained from a questionnaire given to students randomly in Sibolga city. The results of the questionnaire showed that 78.3% of students felt fear after the bomb terror incident that occurred in Sibolga city. Furthermore, 81.6% of students felt shifting or uncertain emotional situations after the bombing terror occurred. This was indicated by the fact that students tended to change their feelings easily. The next indicator used to determine the students’ mental health in this study was the physical health. The information derived from the informants of this study showed that students in Sibolga experienced physical symptoms that made them weak and lack of enthusiasm. The weak and lack cluster condition of the students was very clear when it was seen from their enthusiasm for learning before the bomb terror happened. Furthermore, the informants explained that even some students who used to be diligent and have very good motivation also looked weak and lack of enthusiasm in following the learning process after the bomb terror that occurred. This condition is one of the characteristics of the instability of a person’s physical health and it is an early symptom of a person’s mental health condition\(^\text{32}\). Furthermore, the interview data were supported by the questionnaire results obtained. The results of the questionnaire showed that 86.6% of students felt less comfortable in sleeping after the bomb terror incident. This was due to the trauma effect on the students. On the other hand, 73.3% of students felt that their diet had started to become worse since the terror bomb case occurred. The third indicator in terms of students’ mental health in this study is the attitude or behavior of students in Sibolga. Information got from informants stated that there was a significant change in students’ behavior. This can be seen from the number of students who began to stay away from their social life by being alone and avoiding contact with people. This condition was seen in the majority of students who were in the area of terror. In addition, behavior change can also be seen through the number of students who closed themselves to the psychological problems that they faced after the bomb explosion. This condition made it difficult for teachers to provide treatment that can help students to overcome their problems. In addition to these two things, there were still other behavioral changes from students that clearly different from their previous habits. This data was supported by the results of a questionnaire which showed that the majority of students preferred to live and do their daily activities at home than out of home. In addition, most of them felt that they were less likely to carry out their duties such as doing schoolwork after the bomb terror incident. This condition was caused by their minds distortion by the bomb terror case that occurred. The last indicator that is reviewed on students’ mental health is psychological health. Information obtained from research informants showed that there were signs of changes in the students’ psychological aspects. This can be seen from the excessive anxiety of students after the occurrence of the bomb terror. When the learning process took place, students found it difficult to focus on learning which was proved from the fact that they got difficulty in understanding the material presented by the
teacher. In addition to difficulty of achieving learning goals, students who do not focus also get terror impact on their daily activities which made them tend to be abnormal. The interview data was supported by the results of a questionnaire which showed that 86.3% of students had difficulty in concentrating the learning process in the class. In addition, 69.6% of students experienced anxiety about a follow-up bomb terror in their city.

**DISCUSSION**

The research results showed that the students' mental health after the terror case that happened in their area had decreased. There are several indicators reviewed in this study to determine the students' mental health after the bomb terror incident, these indicators are (1) Emotion; (2) Physical; (3) Behavior; and (4) Psychological. The first indicator is emotional stability. Emotional stability is one aspect that can be reviewed to determine a person's mental health. The results showed that the bomb terror that occurred made the students' emotional condition unstable. Terrors always cause destruction both physically and psychologically to the victims. The impact on the physical often causes injury and even death, while the psychological impact causes emotional instability for each individual who becomes a victim so that the individual gets a psychological burden. Furthermore, Rosendorff & Sandler (2010) revealed through their findings that psychological burdens are more worrying than the physical injuries that they cause. Emotional instability can interfere with an individual's motivation to learn. This will clearly have an impact on the destruction of the civilizations of next generation in the areas affected by terror. Furthermore, the students' emotional instability will make them feel insecure and uncomfortable, so that they find it difficult to follow the learning process.

The next indicator is the students' physical health. This is in line with the findings which state that an individual's physical health can indicate how healthy he is mentally. The results showed that there was a decline in the physical health of the students which was marked by a weak and unenthusiastic condition of the students in carrying out their daily activities, including during learning. Bomb terrors do not only cause a decrease in psychological health, but it also reduces the physical health of each individual due to the impact terror trauma that occurred. Moreover, Li & Liu (2013) through their findings stated that trauma experienced by individuals has a significant effect on the lifestyle they live in. This finding is similar with the findings of Larson & Zallman (2010) which states that trauma to an individual has an impact on cognitive development instability due to the lack of sleeping quality in the individual. Sleeping and eating problems are part of the instability of physical health that will affect mental health. Furthermore, Maslow's theory emphasizes that the first need that must be met in carrying out an effective educational process is the students' physical needs as one part of the implementation of the educational program. This physical need includes the body's energy needs through food and drink consumed as well as rest requirements that are obtained from adequate and quality of sleeping time. The third indicator that is reviewed from students' mental health in this study is a change in individual attitudes or behavior. The results showed that there was a change in students' behavior after the occurrence of a bomb terror. A change in behavior is usually a sign that someone is experiencing mental health disorders. The behavior change shown in this study is that students begin to stay away from social life and tend to be alone at home. In addition, students also find it difficult to believe in other people, and it which makes them choose to close themselves, including solving their psychological problems. Terrorism tends to cause a crisis of social trust that occurs in the community. It is clear that every individual who is a victim of terrorism will tend to close himself off from his social life for reasons of self-protection. The condition of closing oneself and leaving learning and studying duty will have an impact on the students’ difficulty in achieving learning goals. In addition, this will also lead to students’ undisciplined attitude which has an impact on the ineffectiveness of the learning process.

The last indicator reviewed on the students’ mental health in this study is the students' psychological health. This is in line with Edwards & Martin (2010) which states that the psychological health of an individual must be met to get good mental health. The results showed that there were students' psychological disorders characterized by excessive trauma and fear after the bomb explosion. Kanni (2014) stated that a case of terror that happened in the area will have a significant psychological impact on the individual who is the victim. The most visible psychological impacts are emotional instability, trauma, and concentration problems. Students' concentration problems have an impact on their difficulty in understanding the concept of material taught by the teacher during the learning process. Furthermore, students' lack of understanding of the concepts being taught will have an impact on not achieving learning objectives. On the other hand, people excessive anxiety makes them uncomfortable in doing something, including following the learning process.

**CONCLUSION**

The results showed that there was problem seen in the students’ mental health in Sibolga after the bomb terror case in 2019. This can be seen from the disturbances in the students’ emotional stability, physical health problems, extreme behavior changes, and psychological disorders. The students' mental health problems make them feel unsafe and uncomfortable in their activities, and this has an impact on the disruption of the learning process. This research only focuses on analyzing the students' mental health after the bomb terror case in Sibolga, Indonesia. Further research is needed to investigate how significant the effect of terrorism is on students’ mental health and to examine how significant the effect of students’ mental health is on the effectiveness of learning.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**REFERENCES**


