Can Teenagers Put Their '*Shoes*' On Prepetrators and Victims of Bullying?

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Info Article	ABSTRACT
	Social perspective taking (SPT) skills are needed to be able to understand that others have different thoughts than ourselves. This ability is one of the cohesive factors of bullying behavior. This study aims to find out the picture of the ability of early adolescent returns in perpetrators and victims of bullying. Conducted using a qualitative approach to explore adolescents' ability to understand other perception, the study involved subjects of 6 adolescents (3 boys and 3 girls) aged between 13 and 15 years. Data collection is done with open questionnaires and interviews based on the instrument The Social Perspective Taking Acts Measure (SPTAM). The object of the study is three themes, namely, the ability to identify the characteristics of the perpetrator and victim (acknowledgement), the thoughts and feelings of the perpetrator and victim (articulation) and the actions of the perpetrator and victim (positioning). The results showed that each participant was able to acknowledgement and positioning and had difficulty articulation. Articulation, which is the ability to identify the thoughts and feelings of perpetrators and victims, involves higher order thinking, which in the adolescent age range is still in the process of development. Thus, it seems that this is an aspect that needs to be improved with external (adult) help in order to be formed so that minimal prerequisites are met to prevent adolescents from engaging in bullying activities. *Copyright (c) Psikostudia : Jurnal Psikologi*

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BACKGROUND

Adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood (Batubara, 2016). Many changes occur during adolescence, such as hormonal, physical, psychological, and social changes. Characteristics that often occur in early adolescence are an identity crisis, increased verbal and self-expression skills, reduced attachment to parents, and increased attachment to peers (Branje, 2018). Not only social skills but adolescent cognitive abilities also develop. At this stage of cognitive development, adolescents can think abstractly, ideally, and logically as adults. In general, adolescents show that their thoughts related to the social environment are much influenced by the nature of egocentrism. Adolescents believe that they are unique individuals and that no one can understand them (Santrock, 2019).

In the cognitive process, Piaget added that the ability to take perspective (perspective-taking) plays an essential role in the concept of individual self-understanding (Santrock, 2019). Perspective-taking ability is known as "social role taking" or "social perspective-taking." It is because "social role taking" or "perspective-taking" is an individual's ability to see the world (including oneself) from the perspective of others (Kim et al., 2018). Social perspective-taking can make individuals put themselves in the place of others and make conclusions about the abilities, attributes, expectations, and potential reactions of others (Diazgranados et al., 2016). Social perspective-taking is an individual's ability to understand other people's viewpoint.

Social perspective-taking ability is necessary to understand that other people can have different thoughts from oneself. Someone who has poor social perspective-taking skills can cause social discord and problems among peers (Tamnes et al., 2018).

One form of peer-to-peer problems experienced during adolescence is bullying behavior. Bullying is a form of violent behavior carried out by individuals or groups who feel they have power and oppress a group of other people considered weak (Zakiyah et al., 2017). Thomas, Scott, Coates & Connor (2019) explained that bullying is a common experience in adolescence characterized by intentions to harm, power imbalances, and repetitive behavior. Bullying behavior can be projected in the physical, verbal, and digital worlds (cyberbullying) (John et al., 2018).

For the last five years, 1,638 complaints data have been received by the Indonesian National Commission for Child Protection (KPAI), reporting bullying cases both in education and on social media as victims and perpetrators of bullying (KPAI, 2021). Bullying often occurs in high school students aged 11-15 years (Halimah et al., 2015).

Zakiyah, Humaedi dan Santoso (2017) suggested that bullying behavior occurs because the perpetrator perceives themself to have the power to do anything to the victim. It is also experienced by victims perceiving themselves as weak individuals. This perception challenge perpetrators and victims to position themselves with each other, causing problems and social discrepancies. One of the factors that play a role in cyberbullying behavior is the ability to take perspective of others (Pozzoli et al., 2017).

Likewise, Barlinska et al. (2018) research stated that cognitive empathy or perspective-taking could increase the prosocial attitude of bystanders so that cyberbullying behavior also decreases. Diazgranados et al. (2016) stated that adolescents who have skilled social perspective-taking abilities tend to have altruistic behavior, are aware of their social

environment, do not view other people in a stereotyped manner, and are not involved in aggressive behavior.

Besides perpetrators and victims, bystanders have a role in bullying behavior. Bystanders have a role in reducing or strengthening the aggression of bullies (Saarento & Salmivalli, 2015). Teenagers have the potential to become perpetrators, victims, or simply bystanders when bullying behavior occurs. One form of prevention of bullying behavior in adolescents is by providing bystanders training related to understanding bullying situations, perspective-taking abilities, and affective and motivational responses when they see aggressive behavior carried out by bullies (Jenkins, 2020). Therefore, the ability to take perspective is one factor that is predicted to reduce bullying behavior in adolescents.

Previous studies related to bullying and perspective-taking were focused on discussing the influence between these two variables without describing the process of adolescents taking other people's perspectives. Therefore, this study discusses the description of social perspective-taking abilities, especially in early adolescents. Based on the cognitive characteristics of early adolescents and the factors that cause bullying behavior, it is vital to explore adolescents' social perspective-taking abilities.

RESEARCH METHODS

Types of research

This study employed a qualitative approach to illustrate the participants' social perspective-taking. Qualitative research is used to explore and understand the problem being studied in a particular population or individual (Creswell, 2014). The exploratory, descriptive approach is a qualitative research design using interviews as a tool for data collection. This approach is selected to offer an overview of individual experiences based on themes based on a theory (Howitt, 2019).

Research subject

The study participants consisted of six people, three male teenagers and three female teenagers between 13 and 15 years old, recruited voluntarily based on the recommendation of a co-author and one of the schools in Bandar Lampung.

Method of collecting data

The participant recruitment process began with a permit letter and an explanation of research-related information to teachers and parents. The study informed consent sheet was distributed to each parent. After obtaining parental consent, each participant received information on the study implementation, risks, and benefits. The participant's informed consent form was presented at the beginning of the online questionnaire.

Data collection techniques in this study used open questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The data collection process was performed through the Google Meet and Zoom applications and by filling out an open questionnaire via the Google Form device.

Data analysis technique

This study used The Social Perspective-Taking Acts Measure (SPTAM) used in a study by Silvia Diazgranados, Robert L. Selman, and Michelle Dionne (Diazgranados et al., 2016). The SPTAM measures the functional abilities of adolescents through (1) Acknowledgment, which is identifying the roles of different actors, (2) Articulation, which is articulating how other people think and feel in certain situations, and (3) Positioning, which is positioning oneself as a different actor or actor. Different people see situations differently, influenced by their respective roles, experiences, and circumstances in the social world. The

instrument has gone through the translation stage by linguists. The character name change in the scenario in the instrument has been adapted to the Indonesian name context.

The questionnaire comprises two scenarios, and each respondent was requested to answer related to their different roles, i.e., as perpetrators and victims of bullying. After filling out the questionnaire, interviews were conducted to explore the respondents' understanding when providing answers for each role. All data were collected individually. Audio data from interviews were transcribed into verbatim data and analyzed thematically (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Before the interview process, the researcher asked questions to determine the participants' understanding of viewpoint and bullying behavior. The six participants defined viewpoint as the understanding process of the condition in the form of thoughts and feelings of others or interpreted as behavior in positioning oneself in the position of others. Moreover, participants also explained their understanding of bullying behavior. Each participant explained that bullying behavior is a form of behavior that can harm others since it negatively impacts others. Based on the results of the explanation of definitions related to the viewpoint and bullying behavior by the participants, the six participants understood the terms that would be used in this study to facilitate them answering the questions and questionnaires given.

The study results are described based on 3 (three) themes of perspective-taking social skills: acknowledgment (role identification), articulation (the act of understanding the thoughts and feelings of the role), and positioning (the act of placing a position on the role) based on bullying perpetrators and victims.

Acknowledgement

Each participant identified the characteristics of the roles involved in social situations in this theme. Participants revealed the results of identifying the characteristics of bullying victims as loners. Loner is the condition of someone who is reluctant and avoids interaction with other people.

"A loner, doesn't like to socialize or talk to people. Hates to have a conversation." (P2)

Also, participants identified bullying victims as individuals with low self-confidence and difficulty in communicating assertively.

"Has no confidence or doesn't dare to talk. Has no self-worth when bullyed by their friends." (P4)

Meanwhile, according to the participant, the characteristic identification of the bully is a conforming individual. Conformity here is a person influenced by the surrounding environment.

"Sari... mmm she likes to follow the surrounding. When she befriends a group, she's not getting along well with other kids." (P1)

Articulation

Four participants could identify their thoughts on the roles in the social scenarios for both bullying perpetrators and victims.

"Because Andi feels that Lani doesn't fit into their group and they have to ditch Lani. Lani is also shy and has difficulty communicating. That's why she is bullied by the others." (P1)
"Her friends probably don't like Cantika. Either Cantika's appearance or attitudes. That's why she's being picked on." (P2)

Overall, participants managed to identify the thoughts of the bullying perpetrators and victims. In the minds of the bullying perpetrators, participants identified no match between the perpetrator's characteristics and the victim, which is a factor in the bullying behavior. It is also supported by the results of participant identification of the thoughts of bullying victims, where the victims perceive their friends as disliking them. Furthermore, the victim showed a shy attitude that made it difficult to communicate with their friends. It is one of the reasons why the victim is bullied by their friends. Each participant did not identify any good feelings for the victim and the bully in this study.

Positioning

Each participant showed behavior or action in positioning themself as a bullying perpetrator and victim. In the question related to positioning themselves as bullying perpetrators, participants explained that the victim had to change their characteristics to be accepted in a friendly environment.

> *"It'll be better if Ani changes her hairstyle and match her music taste to her classmates. If Ani doesn't have a strange style, they will stop bullying her." (P4)*

Conversely, when participants were positioned as bullying victims, they tried to stop the bullying behavior by reporting it to more competent parties, e.g., class leaders and teachers.

> *"Cantika suggests Randi to be strict to stop the bullying to classmates by reprimanding or taking firm action against classmates who bully their friends because Randi is the class leader." (P4)*
> *"Cantika will suggest Randi to take Lani's journal and report it to the teacher. Cantika should've known how Lani feels right not." (P6)*

Another study finding is that each participant tried to understand the bullying victims and perpetrators based on their perspective as students in the class.

> *"It's better for Roma to invite friends who do not bully Ani to befriend Ani. Usually, bullies will stop bullying if the victim has bigger strengths (friends) than theirs." (P5)*

Each participant understood the viewpoint of the bullying perpetrator and victim and tried to solve the bullying behavior by uniting classmates to fight the bully.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis results above, participants demonstrated social perspective-taking abilities presented on three aspects of social perspective-taking, i.e., identifying the characteristics of the perpetrators, thoughts, and feelings and being able to position their behavior or actions as bullying perpetrators and victims.

Participants stated that the characteristics of bullies are conforming individuals. Hence, they are affected by environmental factors. It follows a study by Menesini dan Salmivalli (2017), demonstrating that bullies are usually the central member or leaders in a group receiving support from other members for the negative behavior. Thus, a dominant group will indirectly form to bully others. Bullies usually show aggressive behavior verbally in groups and dominate social life at school (Zakiyah et al., 2017).

Also, participants asserted that victims of bullying have low self-confidence, difficulty in communicating, and are aloof. Other studies have shown that victims of bullying tend to be quiet, sensitive, lack communication skills, and withdraw from their social environment (Krisnana et al., 2019). Non-assertive communication (Avşar & Ayaz Alkaya, 2017) and the passive

behavior of the victim increase the intensity of the perpetrator to bully (Hardhiyanti et al., 2020).

The participants considered the victim's thoughts as perceiving themself to be disliked by the perpetrator. On the other hand, the perpetrator perceives the victim as an individual who is mismatched with each other to make friends, such as being shy and having difficulty communicating with tastes considered strange by others. The victim's attitude of being non-assertive, not confident, weak, and rejected by his peers are factors of being a bullying victim (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Assertiveness can intimidate the perpetrator. Perpetrators realize that the victim has power and fights back to avoid bullying behavior (Ainiyah & Cahyanti, 2020).

This study also discovered that participants understood the perspectives of victims and bullies when they were in these situations. Participants agreed that preventing bullying behavior requires both the victim and classmates to try to unite in fighting this behavior. It follows another study showing that support from classmates can protect victims and reduce the intensity of perpetrators bullying victims. Classmates act as bystanders to maintain social norms to be able to support bulying victims (Hellström & Lundberg, 2020).

The findings revealed that participants demonstrated perspective-taking abilities in these three aspects. However, in the articulation aspect, participants only demonstrated thoughts of perpetrators and victims without showing the results of identifying the feelings of the two. According to the stages of perspective-taking development (Ayu et al., 2017), perspective-taking skills will develop with age. The description of perspective-taking or social role-taking abilities is divided by age category. The age of 10-15 is the third level, i.e., mutual perspective-taking. At this stage,

children can realize that other people and themselves can see each other simultaneously as subjects (Santrock, 2019). Children can understand others' viewpoints, and other people can also understand their viewpoints. At level 4, it takes place in children aged 12 to adults. This level is referred to as social and conventional system perspective-taking. Individuals at this stage are aware that perspective-taking can be influenced by social and conventional systems (Santrock, 2019). Children can understand others' viewpoints, and other people can also understand their viewpoints. At level 4, it takes place in children aged 12 to adults. This level is referred to as social and conventional system perspective-taking. Individuals at this stage are aware that perspective-taking can be influenced by social and conventional system.

The perspective-taking ability at this stage of adolescence will further develop along with the growth period from adolescence to early adulthood (Ayu et al., 2017). Diazgranados et al. (2016) stated that, in their growth period, children have many opportunities to interact with other people in a wide range of social situations and experiences. Indirectly, their social perspective-taking skills will develop, starting from their understanding of social life that is indifferent and egocentric to becoming more complex and able to understand various viewpoints. Participants demonstrated that their perspective-taking abilities are quite developed, as seen from their ability to identify characteristics and try to place themselves from the perspective of the perpetrator and the victim. However, the participants failed to identify feelings for the victim and the perpetrator.

Perspective-taking abilities are social skills required by adolescents. With optimal development of perspective-taking abilities, adolescents will be able to create a positive

social environment and relationships with themselves and others (Dugan, Bohle, Woelker, & Cooney, 2014). Moreover, the perspective-taking ability possessed by adolescents can improve conflict resolution (Dugan et al., 2014) and able to reduce interpersonal aggression (Ayu et al., 2017). Individuals competent in understanding others' viewpoints can show altruistic behavior and increase social awareness (Diazgranados et al., 2016). Therefore, when adolescents have demonstrated perspective-taking abilities, it is expected that adolescents, especially bystanders, can prevent or mediate this behavior when bullying behavior occurs.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the perspective-taking abilities of the six research participants were shown in the acknowledgment and positioning aspects. Although participants' perspective-taking abilities are developing, they can show their identification with characteristics and thoughts and try to place their viewpoints on the bullying perpetrators and victims. However, their perspective-taking abilities have not shown the results in feeling identification, both for the bullying perpetrators and victims.

Since adolescence is a time when more social interaction is carried out with peers than with parents, adolescents must have the ability to understand others' viewpoints (peers) to have positive and harmonious relationships. Furthermore, teachers and parents can practice their youth's social perspective-taking skills by role playing and discussing things in daily lives.

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