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Analyzing the Aggressive Behavior of Domestic Violence Perpetrators

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Abstract

The study was conducted by describing the aggressive behavior of domestic violence perpetrators which can be seen through how much the contribution of aggressive behavior between sub-variables. This research method uses a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. The subjects in this study were perpetrators who lived in the city of Padang and were taken using purposive sampling techniques, amounting to 82 people. Data is collected through the Aggressive Behavior Inventory Instrument for Domestic Violence (IPAP-KDRT) developed from Buss theory about aspects of aggressive behavior that contains 4 sub, including physical aggression (4 items), verbal aggression (7 items), anger (3 items) and hostility (2 items). The instrument uses a Likert scale model that has five alternative answers with interval data and analyzed with descriptive statistical techniques and simple linear regression analysis. The research findings show that on average the figure of aggressive domestic violence perpetrators is in the moderate category by 71% and aggressive behavior in terms of verbal aggression contributes to physical aggression of 10.3% while aggressive behavior itself contributes to verbal aggression by 65.8%. With the results of this study become input for therapists/counselors some of them is through family counseling with an experimental approach that prioritizes now and here experience.

Keywords: Aggressive Behavior, Domestic Violence Perpetrators, Guidance and Counseling Services

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Introduction

The acts of domestic violence have been recorded in several developed and developing countries of the world (Erhamwilda, 2018), Indonesia inclusive. The high number of cases found in Indonesia is inseparable from the lack and a limited number of appropriate institutions to deal with domestic violence problems which have been discovered to be always directed at women (Hasneni, 2014; Nizarwati, 2012; Soeroso, 2012).

The data from the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) showed a significant increase to 348,446 cases for violence against women (KTP) in 2017 and the violence against wives (KTI) was ranked first with 5,167 cases while West Sumatra province was placed first in the second-placed Sumatra with 999 KTP cases after Central Java (Komnas Perempuan, 2018). Moreover, Padang city was reported by Padang Polresta to have 63 cases of domestic violence between January 2019 and January 2020 (Kasat Reskrim Polresta Padang, 2020).

Several factors cause domestic violence (Afdal, 2015) with the continuous harassment reported to mostly start through physical violence as observed in 3,982 cases (Chiacchia, 2012; Komnas Perempuan, 2018) and the most frequent perpetrators were found to be men or husbands (Margolin et al., 1988 and Wardle et al., 2015) which tend to consider themselves more dominant in the relationship (Sabourin et al., 1993). Moreover, some of this violence is due to inadequate emotional control and strategies to solve problems thereby causing loss of self-control and high risk of aggressive behaviors (Guerra et al., 2003; Hitijahubessy et al., 2018; Minarni, 2017).

Violence is a manifestation of intentional aggressive behavior, both physical and verbal, which causes (Nisfiannoor & Yulianti, 2005; Rahardjo, 2007; Wuisan, 2013) psychological, physical, and material damage to oneself, the environment, and society at large (Castro, 2004). These acts have been reported to be theoretically triggered by several factors (Taufiq, 2017) and most of the studies linking exposure to violence with aggressive behavior have focused on homes or the environment (Guerra, Huesmann & Spindler, 2003).

The existence of several root problems in the family has led to the efforts made towards tackling violence in the household and one of the solutions offered is family counseling using an experimental approach which prioritizes now and here experience (Afdal, 2015). This is related to an individual humanistic therapy emphasizing on the curative power and involvement of the therapist/counselor (Afdal et al., 2017). This article, therefore, analyzed the aggressive behavior of domestic violence perpetrators to determine the causative factors.

Method

The research was conducted quantitatively with descriptive methods to analyze aggressive behavior in domestic violence perpetrators and a simple linear regression analysis technique was used to determine the contribution of certain sub-variables to aggressive behavior. Domestic violence actors from LSM or institutions concerned about domestic violence issues with most aged between 28 and 63 years and a minority between 69 years to 82 years domiciling in Koto Tengah, North Padang, and Pauh districts in Padang City were used as subjects. Most of them have children and work as entrepreneurs/traders, private employees, and farmers/fishermen while some are unemployed.

The Inventory of Aggressive Behavior of Domestic Violence Perpetrators (IPAP-Domestic Violence) developed from a theory proposed by Buss & Perry (1992) on aspects of aggressive behavior was used as the research instrument. It contains 4 sub-variables including physical aggression with 4 items, verbal aggression with 7, anger with 3, and hostility with 2 items. A Likert scale model with five alternative answers including always (S), often (SR), sometimes (KD), rarely (JR), and never (TP) with positive scoring being 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 while negative scoring was 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The questions/statements were also assessed on a 5-point scale with 1 representing 81-100% suitability level, 2 for 61-80%, 3 for 41-60%, 4 for 21-40% and 5 for compliance rate approximately 0-20% as an alternative to the use of always (S) to never (TP). The data were analyzed using intervals classified based on the instrument scale categories ranging from very high (*Sangat Tinggi*-ST), high (*Tinggi*-T), medium (*Sedang*-S), low (*Rendah*-R) to very low (*Sangat Rendah*-SR).

Results and Discussion

The results of the descriptive analysis conducted are shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Aggressive Behavior by Sub-Variable (N = 82)

No	Aspect	Ideal	Max	Min	Mean	SD	Category (%)				
							ST	T	S	R	SR
1	<i>Physical Aggression</i> (4)	20	20	9	18,1	2,2	0	0	90,24	8,54	1,22
2	<i>Verbal Aggression</i> (7)	35	35	24	30,8	2,77	36,59	57,32	6,10	0	0
3	<i>Anger</i> (3)	15	15	7	11	2,1	0	0	34,15	54,88	10,98
4	<i>Hostility</i> (2)	10	10	2	7,1	1,96	0	0	0	21,95	78,05
Total (16)		80	80	42	67	9,03	36,59	57,32	130,49	85,37	90,25

Information:

- Max = Maximum score
- Min = Minimum score
- ST = *Sangat tinggi* (Very High)
- T = *Tinggi* (High)
- S = *Sedang* (Medium)
- R = *Rendah* (Low)
- SR = *Sangat rendah* (Very Low)

The table shows a moderate aggressive behavior in all the dominant aspects with the *physical aggression* observed to have the highest percentage of 90.24% while *hostility* was in the very low category with 78.05%. Furthermore, *verbal aggression* was in the high category with 57.32% while *anger* was in the low category with 54.88%.

The items attached to the *physical aggression* serving as the benchmarks to measure the perpetrator's behavior include statements such as “when something goes wrong with my friend, he immediately pulls his shirt off”, “I kicked things around me, anytime I am angry”, “when someone ridicules my family I beat him up”, and “my wife regrets throwing things around me”. The *verbal aggression* was considered high based on the insult usually provided on the wrong person or problem as observed in the items such as conveying information even when the truth is not clear, calling people they dislike disgusting names, considering it normal to scold someone older, conveying fearlessness to the enemy, speaking rudely to people they do not like, and immediately hitting any problems with their friends.

A research by Gündoğdu et al. found male aggression to be high and this was explained by the social roles attached to men and women (Gündoğdu et al., 2018). Another study by Winstead & Derlega on marriage relations also used gender as one of the most researched variables because the majority of the differences between men and women in society is associated with its roles (Winstead & Derlega, 1993). It has also been discovered that having irrational beliefs about gender differences in marriage is associated with aggression in adulthood which is a significant predictor of physical and verbal aggression as well as hostility and anger (Gündoğdu et al., 2018).

Margolin et al. argued that physically aggressive husbands behave more negatively (Margolin et al., 1988) and there is ongoing evidence which shows past behaviors have the ability to predict future ones. Moreover, the reciprocity of physical aggression by a partner at one time mostly leads to aggressive behavior at a later time (Schumacher & Leonard, 2005). For example, an individual that witnessed and experienced physical aggression in adolescence has a high tendency to exhibit the same in adulthood (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986).

This means background experiences influence both physical and verbal aggression in adulthood despite the fact they are separate dimensions with different predictors. Moreover, physical aggression violates norms and cause physical damage while verbal does not (Stets, 1990). Verbal aggression refers to spoken actions such as men talking about problems which are hurting or threatening to hurt others (Straus, 1979).

Individuals primarily in a state of emotional distress are expected to be very likely to engage in aggressive behavior (Warburton & Anderson, 2015). This is because emotions are situations in which an individual's physical change is manifested in the form of actions, behaviors, words, or expressions (Hazizah, 2019). Moreover, Sabourin et al. also showed a lack of skills to solve problems have the ability to cause verbal aggression (Sabourin et al., 1993).

Verbal aggression and anger are two closely related processes because anger is often understood as the emotion triggering aggression (Smits & De Boeck, 2007). According to Schumacher et al., anger and hostility are the determinants or consistent predictors of partner violence in families (Moscoso & Spielberger, 1999; Schumacher et al., 2001). Anger has also been identified to be reflecting emotional, interpersonal, and attitudinal components based on experiences, expressions, and views of hostile or suspicious attitudes (Musante et al., 1989).

Several kinds of literature, both theoretical and research, on verbal aggression, viewed the concept as a correlative and cause of physical violence in a relationship which may also be due to aggressive personality of some couples (Schumacher & Leonard, 2005) which are usually shaped by interactions in the family or with social environments in childhood (Widiastuti & S, 2017).

The findings, therefore, showed verbal aggression has the highest percentage in very high categories while hostility aspect has the highest in the very low category. This means some of the subjects have very high verbal aggressive behavior while some others have very low hostility. The low and very low levels of aggressive behavior accepted need to be maintained while those with low-intensity are to be minimized to ensure they do not harm and hurt others, especially the wife. Moreover, the contributions of each sub-variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Aggressive Behavior

Aspect	Pag	VA	A	H	PA
Pag		.103	.006	.031	.396
VA	.103		.083	.080	.658
A	.006	.083		.005	.257
H	.031	.080	.005		.273

Information:

Pag	= <i>Physical Aggression</i>	H	= <i>Hostility</i>
VA	= <i>Verbal Aggression</i>	PA	= <i>Perilaku Agresif (Aggressive behavior)</i>
A	= <i>Anger</i>		

The table shows the variables of aggressive behavior in the verbal aggression sub-category contributed 10.3% to physical aggression while 89.7% was influenced by other factors. Similarly, the variables of aggressive behavior itself contributed 65.8% to verbal aggression while the remaining 34.2% was caused by other factors.

According to Stets, an individual without any initial aggressive behavior but which later exhibits verbal aggression has the ability to show other behaviors such as physical aggression. However, these other possibilities may not be possible, unless there are sufficient causes such as growing up in a culture where aggression is acceptable or structural tension is present. This is not only personal but can be through others triggering the onset of aggressive behavior after verbal aggression has occurred (Stets, 1990).

Several kinds of literature, both theoretical and research, viewed verbal aggression as a correlative and cause of physical violence in a relationship (Sabourin et al., 1993). This was associated with the fact that violence does not immediately lead to physical aggression without an exchange of words according to structural and cultural perspectives, therefore, it can be concluded that both dimensions are influenced by the same factors (Stets, 1990).

Verbal and physical aggression are manifestations of two fundamentally different phenomena as observed with the verbal aspect having a lower threshold. Moreover, aggression is also explained to be a two-step process which started with verbal but later moved to the physical aggression as reported by Hoffman (1984) that it also has the ability to cause psychological problems. It is, however, important to reiterate that physical aggression refers to action with the intent to cause physical harm to others and the term has been reported to be synonymous with domestic violence (Gelles & Straus, 1979).

The findings showed higher verbal aggression by a domestic violence perpetrator usually leads to more physical aggression while hostility was observed to have contributed the lowest with 0.005% to anger in aggressive behavior. According to Deffenbacher et al. and Tafrate & Kassinove, aggressive verbal responses to the stimulus from anger are more common (Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005) while Margolin et al. also found a physically aggressive husband to be acting more based on anger (Margolin et al., 1988). In addition, Burman et al. also discovered couples with physical aggression are usually angrier (Burman et al., 1993). Opposition is significantly related to the scale reflecting awareness, particularly verbal expressions of anger (Musante et al., 1989). Enmity or *hostility* has also been found to be positively correlated with the level of physical aggression and a significant predictor of a husband exhibiting such behavior (McKenry et al., 1995).

Previous perspectives showed hostility contributes very low to anger even though they are both indicators of aggressive behaviors caused by verbal and physical aggression. This was confirmed by the findings of Holtzworth-Munroe et al. and several other researchers that violent men are angrier and more hostile than non-violent ones and this is generally observed as a response to a conflict in marriage (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997).

Conclusion

The aggressors' behavior towards their wives was found to be in the medium category. Moreover, verbal aggression was found to be the highest in the very high category while hostility topped the very low category of aggressive behaviors. Verbal aggression was also recorded to have contributed 10.3% to physical aggression while aggressive behavior itself contributed 65.8% to verbal aggression. However, hostility and anger are also an important cause of aggressive behavior as observed in the perpetrator's angrier and more hostile attitudes compared to non-violent ones.

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