

ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY
IN TREATING VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
(Family Therapy and Story Telling Therapy)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the changes experienced by the subjects after family therapy and storytelling therapy. This research used descriptive qualitative study with Curative Therapy methods and the Observational Analysis. Subjects of the research were two children in their middle childhood (6-8 years) who were chosen through purposive sampling, their families were included in the therapy, and live in Semarang. Islamic Psychological approach were applied through family therapy in the form of understanding of the nature of sexual identity of children, understanding puberty, giving family support, as well as doing of Islamic religious ritual by reviewing the interpretation on the Qur'an and Sunnah with the child and planting the moral and beliefs in the family. Those efforts were accompanied by storytelling therapy based on Islamic psychology approach, namely through the implementation of Islamic sirah through storytelling and role playing.

The results shows that the impact of sexual violence to the subjects are reluctant to go to school, have a sense of inferiority, tend to withdraw from society, experience irritability and aggressiveness. When the subject and family participate in the therapy for 6 months, it can be seen that those children showed a noticeable progress in their behavior by getting back to school, showing their happiness, starting to play with their friends although the intensity was still less than usual. Another finding in the study is the formation of family cohesiveness. Treatment will continue until the next 1-2 years, and it is expected that it will become a habit in the family.

Keywords: child sexual abuse, curative therapy, family system

INTRODUCTION

Cases of violence against children (child abuse) have been increasingly common. In the last few years, a lot of printed and electronic media have reviewed the cases of child abuse. Violence against children might come from family, school, and surrounding neighborhood.

A research has suggested that most working mother with low income are experiencing work disorder and stress related to child care which in turn causes the increasing risk of physical and psychological violence and child neglect. It was also discovered that the risk of violence against children is higher in single-parent family compared to those in two-parent family (Ha, Collins & Martino, 2015). Sugiarno (2002) defines *child abuse* as wrongdoings which were performed by adults to children, in terms of physically, emotionally, or sexually. Child abuse can be initiated by family stress resulted from children, parents, and surrounding environment. The wrongdoers are usually the closest persons such as parents or other family members as well as people outside the family. Violence against children can be done in many ways, and one of them is sexual violence or abuse to children.

Child sexual abuse is a form of abuse against children where adults or teenagers exploit children for their sexual stimulation. Child sexual abuse includes engaging in sexual activities with a child (whether by request or threatening), indecent exposure (of genitals, nipples of women), putting indecent dress on children, or using children to produce pornography (Tower, 2002) Sexual abuse includes acts only penetrative abuse, but also acts of masturbation, oral sex, fondling, voyeurism, exposure to sexual acts, exposure to or involvement in pornography and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation to sexually satisfy the wrongdoers; usually inflicted by adults or older children (Mathews, 2014.)

Sexual violence or sexual abuse of children is an issue that continues to be studied because the cases are increasingly widespread and alarming. The cases of sexual harassment are in very alarming number and they exist in almost all regions of any country. Like in India, child sexual abuse has become under-reported violation and has reached epidemic proportions. A new study on the prevalence of sexual abuse in teenagers in Kerala has reported that 36% of boys and 35% of girls have experienced

social abuse for several time points (Moirangthem, Kumar and Math, 2015). According to data of violation against child rights which were compiled by National Commissions of Child Protection (KPAI, 2016), from 30 provinces in Indonesia and compliant service, in 2009, the observed violence against child rights had reached 15.447.921 cases and has been increased to 40.398.625 cases in 2012 and 72.318.099 cases in 2014. Besides that, the institution reported that during the period of January-June 2016, there were 64.326 children who had become the victim of sexual violence from their closest persons like parents, stepparents, teachers, uncles, grandfathers, and neighbors.

Sexual abuse is an important matter for community. Sexual abuse causes negative effects when the children grow up like feeling depressed, Post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and drug abuse, feeling inferior and demotivated. It can be said that traumatic experiences including sexual abuse in childhood has resulted in eternal implications, including in education (Robst, 2009). Therefore, provision of effective child protection for the victims should be done. The efforts include preventive and curative treatment (Rai, 2016).

UNICEF has reported the results of research on the prevalence of various forms of violence against children based on the global figures and data from 190 countries. It shows that sexual violence has a serious effect on children. Violence in general and sexual violence in particular have impaired a child's future, resulting in the damage of children's physical, psychological and emotional condition and in many cases, have ended the life of those children. (UNICEF, 2015).

Based on the research of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komisi Nasional Perempuan, 2012), it has been stated that in addition to the women as wives, violence was also experienced by girls, in the form of emotional and sexual abuse experienced in their own home. This kind of violence has reached as much as 40% of 370 cases of violence in Indonesia in early 2012. This situation raises a concern for the survival of the next generation, so there is an urge to reduce violence against children, especially in the family because the family is the leading agency in the lives of children, where children learn and express themselves as social beings. All things performed by children will affect the family and family provides a basic formation of

behavior, character, morals, and education to children. The experience of family interaction will determine the child's behavior towards others in the community.

Basically, human beings will always be associated with the system of life. The core system of life lies in the family. The family is considered as a functional unit, more than a collection of role of family members. The actions of individual in family will affect all other family members, and interaction in the family had a mutual influence to every family member that occurs either individually or together (Corey, 2009). Problems faced by individuals is considered as interpersonal problem, therefore the resolution requires interventions which are directed at the relationship between individuals. Relationships between individuals in the family has become the focus of intervention because it has major significance than any other form of relationship in social networks. The system in holistic families affects the whole children's health (Michaelson, Pickett, King & Davison, 2016).

From the preliminary study in X area, Semarang, there had been two cases of child sexual abuse to girl, who were chosen as the subject of the study. Those victims were experiencing stress symptoms, feeling depressed, shutting themselves down from their surroundings, unwilling to play with their friends, decreasing appetite and opposing their parents. The researcher also observed that their parents are aware to the changes of their children's condition but unable to communicate well with them and resulted in conflict between parents or with other family members.

Family Therapy is an effort to help individuals as part of family members through the family system (family communication improvement) to develop their potential optimally so the problem can be solved on the basis of the willingness to help each other on the basis of love. Its main focus is the relationship of the individual with the problem, members of the family and the social network by changing the patterns of family interaction that can solve the family problems (Gurman, Kniskern & Pinsof, in Corey, 2010). Counselor or therapist helps the client in order to reduce the level of anxiety and emotional barriers as well as finds, understands, and solves problems and drawbacks experienced by the individuals with the help of other family members. Intervention that involves the whole family should be done to improve the durability and reduce the risk of psychological health of children who have high stress levels

(Lester, Liang, Milburn, Mogil, Woodward, Nash, Aralis, Sinclair, Semaan, Klosinski, Beardslee & Saltzman. 2016), which was caused by, one of them, a traumatic event.

In addition to family therapy approach, a storytelling approach was also applied to the subjects of the study who were in their childhood. According to Echols (in Aliyah, 2011) storytelling consists of two words: story and telling. Storytelling is the efforts of storytellers in conveying the contents of feelings, thoughts, or a story to children orally. According to Asfandiyar (2007) storytelling is a creative process of children which during their development, it activates not only the intellectual aspects but also aspects of sensitivity, tenderness, emotion, art, fantasy, and imagination by optimizing left and right brain. In general, children, from toddlers, elementary school children, teenagers, enjoy storytelling.

Storytelling is beneficial to build rapport and harmony of the family, provide communication means for children and parents, act as therapeutic media for problematic children, give motivation, and develop their spirituality (Kusmiadi, Sriwahyuningsih & Nurfalalah, 2008). Other benefits of storytelling according to Mubarak (2008) are: (1) to convey advice and examples of role models from Islamic stories, (2) to establish good behavior according to the moral of the story, (3) to convey the teachings of religion, especially Islam, from the history of Islam, the Acts of the Prophet, the Prophet, the Companions and the righteous people, (4) to act as simple, effective and attractive entertainment.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research was aimed to identify the changes of subjects' psychological condition after the implementation of family therapy and storytelling therapy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was a descriptive qualitative study using Curative Therapy and Observational analysis. Psychological curative therapy is psychological healing/treatment with the main intent being to eliminate symptoms of disorder in clients (Dorland's Medical Dictionary for Health Consumers. 2007). Subjects were observed having stress symptoms, feeling depressed, shutting themselves up from

community, lack of willingness to play with their friends, decreasing appetite, and opposing their parents. Curative therapy can be done in forms of training, counseling, and treatment applied to clients. This study used family therapy and storytelling therapy.

Observational analysis approach is aimed to observe the details of psychological changes in subjects in terms of social skills and cognitive abilities (Tracy Vail and Denise Freeman, 2006) after therapy.

There were 2 female subjects in middle childhood (7-8 years old) who were chosen through purposive sampling. The characteristics of the subjects are: experiencing sexual violence in the last 1 year, living with parents, and staying in Semarang.

Islamic psychology approach through family therapy is a form of understanding the nature of gender identity in children, puberty education, social support from family and Islamic religious activities applied at home such as intensifying group and regular sunnah prayers, analyzing the interpretation of the Quran, intensifying the moral and beliefs together with family. The therapy was also supported by storytelling therapy by implementing Islamic sirah through storytelling and roleplaying.

Details of data source of case 1

Note: Sexual abuse was performed by subject's neighbor

No	Name	Status
1.	DS (8 years old)	Subject 1
2.	NF (35 years old)	Subject's mother
3.	SR (40 years old)	Subject's father
4.	KN (14 years old)	Subject's sibling

Details of data source of case 2

Note: Sexual abuse was performed by subject's father

No	Name	Status
1.	SA (7 years old)	Subject 2
2.	HI (43 years old)	Subject's mother
3.	LP (20 years old)	Subject's sibling
4.	WS (11 years old)	Subject's sibling

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Story Telling Implementation

Story Telling Therapy was conducted for 6 month for 30-minute sessions which were done twice a week (on Monday and Thursday, before bed time) by choosing different stories for each session. The schedule of Story Telling Therapy can be seen in the following table:

MONTH/ WEEK	ACTIVITIES	CONTENT	Storyteller
1/ 1	Reading the stories of Prophet Muhammad	Honesty and discipline	Mother/father
1/ 2	Reading the stories of Prophet Sulaiman	Showing care to animals and having wisdom	Siblings
1/ 3	Reading the stories of Umar bin Khattab	Strong, decisive and fair leader	Mother/father
1/ 4	Reading the stories Ali bin Abi Thalib	Smart and courageous individual	Siblings

Note: The activities were evaluated monthly and a roleplay related to the story was inserted.

Family Therapy

Family therapy applied in the family is a family gathering conducted every Saturday for 6 month in a small group discussion or sharing stories assisted with the researcher as counselor. For subject 1, the family therapy involved father, mother, and subject's sibling, while for subject 2, the therapy involved mother and 2 siblings. The discussion will be described below:

1. The nature of gender identity

In middle childhood, the material presented is about the gender identity as a girl, preparing for puberty, understanding the nature of a girl (Jauzi, 2002).

2. Education of puberty

The material presented are the ability to cover the genitals, maintaining balance views and interaction with the opposite sex, keeping the reproductive organ healthy, learning to be responsible with her actions, being sensitive to social issues (Rusfi, 2015).

3. Social support from family

Social support is conducted in the form of a discussion about the support needed for subject's self-recovery related to sexual violence. Because the subject of the second family comes from family with middle income, the support was emphasized on emotional support, appreciative and information (Desiningrum, 2010).

During the family therapy, Islamic religious activities were also applied such as intensifying praying in group at least once a day, analyzing the interpretation of the Quran related to child care, roles of women in Islam, and nurturing morality and faith in family after fajr prayer. All of the activities were evaluated weekly by using the Behavior Check List.

Observational Analysis

Observed aspects to measure changes after undergoing therapy are:

Cognitive abilities:

- a. Ability to answer simple questions about daily life.
- b. Ability to understand stories by reading or listening
- c. Understanding advice and accepting positive inputs.

Social skills:

- a. Intensity of going to school
- b. Intensity of playing with friends
- c. Ability to communicate well with parents and siblings

Data Analysis Result

Based on the analysis, four themes of attitude changes have been observed, namely: (1) changes in motivation (2) interpersonal relationship interests (3) changes in lifestyle (4) changes in intensity of religious worship and Islamic morals. The following table shows the findings observed from both subjects.

Table 1
Theme Findings

Main Themes	Superordinate Themes
Changes in motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willingness to study at school 2. Willingness to learn 3. Showing happiness
Interpersonal relationship interests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willingness to socialize with friends 2. Willingness to share with parents and siblings 3. Willingness to share with teachers
Changes in lifestyle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural appetite to eat 2. Natural pattern of sleep 3. No nightmares 4. Autorutinity to take a bath, play, and go to school
Changes in intensity of religious worship and Islamic morals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Doing fard prayer 5 times in a day 2. Participating in group praying 3. Routinely reading the Quran at home 4. Speaking politely 5. Helping parents at home

Discussion

Child sexual abuse experienced by subjects had resulted in the changes of subjects' attitude such as stress symptoms, feeling depressed, shutting themselves down from their surroundings, unwilling to play with their friends, decreasing appetite, having nightmares, and opposing their parents.

Phenomena of child sexual abuse have not been taken seriously by the adults around them and the government. In a study in Ghana, it has revealed how cultural factors affect the conceptualization of child sexual abuse and resulted in unwillingness of children who become the victims of sexual abuse to conceal their experience (Ibrahim, 2014). Children who do not want to reveal feelings and thoughts about their traumatic experience will result in behaviors like shutting themselves down, feeling inferior, unwilling to hang out, even experiencing depression.

Storytelling is a useful therapy treatment to help children in expressing their opinions and feelings. Loban (in Aningsih, 2010) states that storytelling can be a motivation to develop children's awareness and expand their imagination since there are morals of the story that can be developed. The contribution of using images to children with traumatic experiences is very effective for a smooth experience in communicating their feelings and emotions (Katz & Hamama, 2013). Expected changes as the impact of

storytelling are the interest to talk with parents, siblings, friend / teacher, the willingness to continue learning in order to have a bright future and the desire to be a good person, like the character of the stories that were read.

Children are gift from God that must be taken care of and educated. Families are social agents who determine the direction of children's development, thus families are microsystems. In these microsystems, children interact directly with parents, teachers, and friends with the same age. According to Bronfenbrenner, in the family, children are not passive recipients of experiences yet they are individuals who interact reciprocally with others and help to construct a family setting (Santrock, 2011). Since children act as active individuals, parents' roles have become more challenging to carry out the mandate of children. As to the problem of sexual abuse of children in this study, a review has stated that the mass media is a means of preaching altering the news content by blaming the parents for what happened to the children (Miller, Hefner & Leon, 2014).

The results of the study with comparative case study approach which examines the differences and similarities of the system in the United States and Kenya in response to the sexual abuse of children states that the dominant strategy to address child sexual abuse in the United States is by applying formal child protection system. While in Kenya, the efforts were focused more on locally based efforts to empower children and communities to reject the child exploitation and child abuse (Mildred & Plumme, 2009).

Sexual education of children is important to build a positive understanding about themselves, to be aware of their sexual development so that they can be more introspective, and at the same time maintain the cleanliness and safety of their sexual organs. A study focused on the effectiveness of sex education programs for children shows that there are no reports on increasing sexual behavior, and knowledge of the child was developed that makes their parents feel satisfied and support the program (Kenny, 2010). In this study, it is stated that family therapy with the material focused on understanding the nature of female sexual identity and education about puberty resulted in the understanding of both subjects to the content material which was reflected through the feedback or comments.

Because the victims of sexual abuse are children, the efforts to treat and cure the

effects of traumatic events were conducted through a special approach to explore the whole understanding of the children and use the power of observation to see the signs of children who were the victims of sexual abuse. Exploration can be done if the surrounding adults are open, safe, and convenient for children to share their stories. (Flam & Haugstvedt, 2013). Family Therapy applied in this study has created a comprehensive social support from all components of the subjects' family such as willingness to listen, appreciation to the statement of the subjects, and giving motivation to the subjects to share feelings and return to their initial habits.

Treatment of children who were victims of sexual abuse can be done by various methods, such as the approach of religiosity. A qualitative study using transcendental-phenomenological research design in Malaysia conducted to women who were victims of sexual abuse in their childhood, results in an experience to every subject about the presence of God in their lives, a change of perspective on sexual abuse they experienced, and finding the relationship to the Creator, as well as finding peace and tranquility through rituals (Ping & Sumari, 2012). In this study, an increase in ritual worship can be seen from routine religious activities such as punctuality in fardhu prayers, occasionally join group prayers and read the Koran which in turn become a habit that give positive effects to the subject by doing the routines. The greater influence can be seen on the formation of moral subjects like speaking more politely and showing concern for others like helping parents and respecting siblings

The findings of this study is the formation of subjects' resilience. Resilience is the ability of individuals to adjust and adapt to changes, claims, and disappointments that arise in life. Resilience is the ability to adapt and remain steadfast in difficult situations (Reivich and Shatté, in Black & Lobo, 2008). In this case, the subjects have returned to normal life patterns, like appetite, sleeping patterns and daily routines such as taking a bath, playing, and going to school. These changes were the results of the social support from the family. Positive family relationships can improve people's ability to recovery from the previous state (Sapin, Widmer & Iglesias, 2016). Functioning family system is needed for the child to survive the rigors of living and feel better (Eşkisu, 2014). The limitations of this study are the low validity of the data because the researchers did not perform inter-rater assessment by involving other

observers so the study tends to be subjective. However, researcher was trying to minimize them by performing data triangulation through a short interview to the family members related to ongoing changes in the subjects' behavior.

CONCLUSION

The result shows that the implementation of family therapy and storytelling therapy conducted for 6 month have helped the subjects in their attitude and behavior. The observed changes include (1) changes in motivation: both subjects were willing to back to school, study, and show their happiness, (2) interpersonal relationship interests: both subjects have started to socialize with their friends and share their experiences with parents, siblings, and teacher, (3) changes in lifestyle: both subjects started to have their daily routine such as eating, taking a bath, playing, and natural pattern of sleep, (4) changes in intensity of religious worship and Islamic morals: both subjects have started to pray regularly, cite the Quran, and speak more politely.

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