

Self-awareness of domestic violence in the decision-making of divorced

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ABSTRACT

It is difficult for domestic violence survivors to decide to divorce after experiencing psychological trauma, which decreases the level of their awareness. In this regard, the existential perspective of humanism views self-awareness as one of the factors that can encourage humans to take action to change their living conditions to be better than before. This study aims to explore the process of developing the self-awareness of domestic violence to be able to decide to divorce a husband who committed domestic violence using an existential-humanistic perspective. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach and involves three female domestic violence as a research subject. Research data was collected through in-depth interviews by exploring the meaning of the experience of domestic violence survivors who had decided to divorce. The results showed that the divorce decisions taken by the domestic violence survivors were related to increasing self-awareness. Domestic violence survivors who reach a higher level of self-awareness are significantly more empowered and able to make better decisions in their lives.

Keywords: Divorce decision making, domestic violence, self-awareness

ABSTRAK

Kesadaran diri penyintas KDRT dalam pengambilan keputusan bercerai

Sulit bagi penyintas KDRT memutuskan untuk bercerai setelah mengalami trauma psikologis yang menurunkan tingkat kesadaran dirinya. Berkaitan dengan ini, perspektif eksistensial humanistik memandang kesadaran diri sebagai salah satu faktor yang dapat mendorong manusia mengambil tindakan untuk mengubah kondisi hidupnya agar lebih baik dari sebelumnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendalami proses pengembangan kesadaran diri para penyintas KDRT hingga mampu memutuskan untuk bercerai dari suami yang melakukan KDRT menggunakan perspektif eksistensial humanistik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi dan melibatkan tiga perempuan penyintas KDRT sebagai subjek penelitian. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan menggali makna pengalaman penyintas KDRT yang telah memutuskan bercerai. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keputusan bercerai yang diambil penyintas KDRT berhubungan dengan peningkatan kesadaran diri. Penyintas KDRT yang mencapai tingkat kesadaran diri yang lebih tinggi secara signifikan merasa lebih berdaya dan mampu membuat keputusan yang lebih baik dalam hidup mereka.

Kata kunci: Kesadaran diri, Pengambilan keputusan bercerai, Penyintas KDRT,

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INTRODUCTION

People who experience violence and threat of violence in the scope of the household are referred to as victims of domestic violence (domestic violence) [1]. In this study, victims of domestic violence are referred to as domestic violence survivors. Domestic violence survivors, in their sense, are individuals who have succeeded in leaving a dangerous zone of life due to violence that occurs in their household and can return to living a meaningful life. Domestic Violence (Domestic Violence) is the most common form of violence against women in Indonesia until 2021. Domestic violence cases consistently rank first, and the percentage is always above 79% of other issues that occur in Indonesia. A total of 3.221 cases of domestic violence during 2020 were the majority of cases of violence against women from all reported cases [2].

The wives of domestic violence survivors always experience the same pattern of violence from year to year. Most victims of domestic violence experienced physical violence, followed by non-physical violence. Physical and sexual violence refers to the form of violence related to physical intervention against women. Non-physical violence itself is categorized into four types of violence, namely emotional violence, psychological violence, social violence, and economic violence [3]. The overall cases of domestic violence reported recorded as many as 2.025 cases were cases of physical violence, 1.983 cases of sexual violence, 1.792 cases were cases of psychological violence, and the remaining 680 cases of economic violence [4], which occurred within one year. Three factors generally cause domestic violence in Indonesia: (1) patriarchal culture, (2) misunderstanding of Islamic teachings, especially regarding the obligations of husband and wife, and (3) the position and power of an unbalanced married couple. These three causative factors identify that men have a more significant opportunity to commit violence because their status is considered higher than women.

Gender bias in patriarchy puts women in a weak position so that men dominate the family [2]. As many as 15-71% of women who were victims of domestic violence were indicated to experience psychological trauma as a result of all forms of violence they experienced [5]. Treatment snapped and hit by the husband to the wife raised feelings of panic and fear. The emotions that arise are difficult to explain in words because the signal from the traumatic events received by the amygdala, namely the area of the brain that is responsible for defining and controlling emotions and feelings of fear, will be interpreted as

a threat [6]. When a person experiences trauma, the active amygdala system causes a large amount of catecholamine to be released as a reaction to the state that is not frightening or causes anxiety [7]. This then causes individuals to tend to issue excessive responses to unexpected stimuli.

Previous studies found that as many as 96.2% of victims of violence against women and children experienced psychological trauma [8]. The trauma of the domestic violence experienced by an individual has a destructive impact on the psyche and physical of the individual. Women who have experienced domestic violence have physical and mental health three times worse than women who have never experienced domestic violence, which is 6.4% compared to 2.4% for poor physical health and 3.4% compared to 1.1% for mental health [9]. The trauma experienced by victims of domestic violence can cause physical disorders such as irregular heartbeats and psychosomatic effects such as stomach pain and headaches [10]. Psychologically, trauma caused by domestic violence can cause anxiety, fear, depression, and stress disorders after trauma, causing a desire to commit suicide [8]. Trauma due to domestic violence makes the victim more suspicious of others around him and have difficulty in developing social relations or romanticism [6]. Most victims who experienced trauma due to domestic violence lost their confidence and felt that they were no longer valuable (Lack of Self-worth).

Women victims of domestic violence constantly feel insulted, and actions that demean their dignity and their values as human beings become reduced. Physical and psychological exploitation experienced by domestic violence survivors tends to make them consider themselves no more than a woman with a gloomy future [11]. Despite experiencing trauma due to experiencing domestic violence, it is not as well as making victims of domestic violence immediately break their relationship with their husbands. Domestic violence tends to have low self-awareness, so that they become helpless [12]. They believe many things can be problematic if they live separately from their husband. It takes more effort (extra effort) for each domestic violence survivor to achieve a high level of self-awareness so that they can realize the potential that exists in themselves and can solve the problems they face.

From a humanistic, existential perspective, self-awareness is a form of an individual's sensitivity to the mind and mood. With high self-awareness, individuals will be able to recognize or understand their feelings and behavior, recognize their strengths and

weaknesses, have an independent attitude, and not depend on others [13]. The process of self-awareness (self-awareness) is mapped into five primary stages, namely the first stage of mental resource focus, the second stage of vigilance in vulnerable situations, the third stage is the 'my emotional stage harms me,' the fourth stage is 'aware of my strength,' And finally is the conscious step and able to make decisions [14].

Humans can realize the potential they have. They are free to choose to determine their destiny and are responsible for whatever they have chosen [15]. But unlike the case with the survivors of domestic violence, the psychological trauma that they experience reduces their level of self-awareness. Hence, it is difficult for them to determine a choice in life. Thus, it is essential to explore how domestic violence survivors build their awareness so that they can decide to divorce their husbands in terms of existential perspectives on humanitarianism.

METHOD

This study was compiled carefully using a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This approach generally focuses on the essence of life experiences or phenomena, which can be observed or felt by people who have different perspectives [16], [17]. The phenomenon in question is the process of developing the self-awareness of domestic violence to be able to make divorce decisions, seen from the existential perspective of humanistic. The focus of this research is on the process of discovering the self-awareness of domestic violence to be able to decide to divorce the husband. This process is complex and personal, so researchers need to explore in-depth information from the informant. The subjects of this study were three female domestic violence women who had the initials BE (34), MW (30), and LA (40) who came from three different cities, namely Tegal, Jakarta, and Bandung. The three subjects were selected with criteria requirements, namely domestic violence in Indonesia who were female, aged 30-40 years, experienced domestic violence since the first year of marriage, and were willing to become informants in research. Informant data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Research Informant

| No. | Informant's initial name | Gender | Age | Information |
|-----|--------------------------|--------|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | BE | Woman | 34 years | Divorced |
| 2. | MW | Woman | 30 years | The process of deciding to divorce |
| 3. | LA | Woman | 40 years | Divorced |

The data collection technique used is an in-depth interview (in-depth interview) indirectly through online media to find out in more detail the chronology experienced by the subject and the background of each research subject. The phenomenological approach views good informants as all individuals who represent the experiences of people who have experienced this phenomenon [18], [19]. Therefore, the chosen informant is a domestic violence survivor because they have relevant experience and views to answer questionable problems. The three informants were selected using criterion sampling techniques to meet the criteria needed by researchers. Researchers have made efforts to ensure that the informant represented the population by expanding the scope of informants from three different cities, conducting in-depth interviews with informants, and teaching literature studies related to the keyword research, namely, self-awareness, domestic violence, and humanistic, existential perspective, with Identifying several documents, books, and supporting journals [20].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings were presented in two sub-chapters, namely, a general description of the survivor of domestic violence and the experience of the survivor of domestic violence in deciding to divorce.

a. General description of domestic violence

The summary of the results of the domestic violence interview provides a general description of domestic violence survivors in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2 Interview Results

| Initial/Age Name | Profession | Domestic violence experience | Domestic Violence Type | Because the decision to divorced |
|------------------|---------------|---|--|---|
| BE/34 years. | Dentist | Experienced domestic violence since the beginning of marriage (2013-2017) | Economic Violence: Utilized financially, bearing all family needs. Physical violence: forced, threatened, and beaten. Psychological Violence: Receiving insults is not worthy of being a wife | He feels this marriage rules him and feels insecure (unsafe) if he stays together with her husband. |
| MW/30 years | Self-employed | Experiencing domestic violence since the second year of marriage (2015-present) | Economic Violence: Not given a living by the husband. Physical violence: pelted, stepped on, and dragged. Psychological violence: cheated on, gets gaslighting. | Deciding to divorce: Considering his child who still needs a father figure. |
| LA/40 years | Designer | Experiencing domestic violence since the beginning of marriage (2008-2011) | Physical-sexual violence: forced to have sexual intercourse without consent, threatened to be killed. Psychological violence: yelled and degraded. | I was feeling tired, angry, and grudge against a husband who always committed violence physically, sexually, and psychologically. |

The three domestic violence survivors went through a long process to be able to decide to divorce from a husband who had committed domestic violence against them. The three survivors experience various forms of domestic violence, ranging from economic, physical, and psychological to sexual. Domestic violence can cause multiple negative impacts, both physically and psychologically. The material impact is in the form of injuries, while the psychological impact is in the form of trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Psychological trauma experienced by domestic violence survivors can cause a loss of self-confidence and a lower level of self-awareness. This can happen

because domestic violence victims often feel worthless and unfit to be loved. They also feel afraid to express what happens or do something for fear of being attacked again. This situation can cause domestic violence victims to question their existence as a human. They feel they are no longer valuable and have no place. Therefore, increased self-awareness is essential for individuals, especially for those who experience problems caused by a lower level of self-awareness.

b. The process of developing domestic violence self-awareness

The discovery of the self-survivor of domestic violence takes place through several stages. Each stage is a meaningful self-experience despite the ups and downs of dynamics in his life. The following sets of the development of self-awareness are passed from the three subjects:

1) Conscious stage: "I am a victim of domestic violence"

The findings of this study revealed that the three domestic violence survivors, namely BE, MW, and LA, gradually raised their self-awareness before finally daring to make decisions to divorce their husbands. BE, and La leads attention to the fact that he is a "victim of domestic violence" sometime after being physically tortured by her husband. Unlike the survivors of MW, the main focus of mental resources is the existence of a fear of living together with her husband.

"When I experienced that what I continued to feel was" scared, "I was also disappointed. I was also confused between believers and not that he dared to hurt me, and I was a victim of this domestic violence. But at the same time, I still hope he changes and considers it a mistake, even though I fear continuing to live with the perpetrators." (W.S2)

"I cannot immediately take legal action or report my husband to the police, I cannot focus on thinking about anything else, eh I'm afraid he is" as if "will kill me." (W.S3)

As a result, in this phase, when the main focus of mental resources is on their fear and status as victims, the three domestic violence survivors become unfocused on other things and have difficulties in communicating correctly what they feel and think about.

2) Stage of "Fear of Treatment Treatment Repeated"

The subject slowly realizes that he is in a vulnerable situation and endangered. What if he is close to her husband? The husband is often doing physical and psychological torture against him, which makes the SATUIASI vulnerable. Likewise with MW,

although he was confused by the act of domestic violence committed by her husband against him, it does not mean that MW is negligent about the perpetrators' actions.

At this stage, each individual began to be sensitive to the pattern of violence carried out by the perpetrators. In the case of MW, MW is always on guard whenever he fights with her husband. He prepared himself to avoid physical and psychological injuries by considering all the possibilities that could occur. In the case of LA survivors, this stage involves LA's vigilance towards her husband's movements when emotional. The primary survivors of LA are "not careless and aware that myself is being a victim of domestic violence." If La is careless and just silent and does not avoid her husband, who is ignited by emotions, her husband will easily do physical torture, insult her, threaten to kill her, and so on.

3) The stage "My emotions harm me."

"It feels enough. For more than eight years, I have survived in my soul, mind, physical and psychological life. All my feelings, patience, and strength have run out. I have been wasting my life for a long time for a marriage that no longer gives me happiness. So, it's time for me to start being happy, raising children, and exploring my potential for the rest of my life. " (W.S2)

The subject Be, MW, and LA realized that the emotions of sadness, fear, and anger with her husband would be in vain and harm them physically, psychologically, socially, and in the economy if they did not direct them to the action to rise at this stage. Survivors need to realize that the feeling of sadness, fear, and anger can be an obstacle if not appropriately managed.

This is what causes conscious conditions in the three domestic violence survivors for emotions that can harm them, such as survivors who experience fear repeatedly and become more sensitive to insecurity. Neocortex identifies and translates this feeling of fear so that his rational mind decides to avoid her husband. BE does not let the fear master it because he realizes it will only harm him. Thus, he also has the opportunity to recover from the trauma he experienced.

4) Stage of "Aware of my strength"

"All the things that I have experienced, fear, crying, anger, scars on my body will be in vain if I just stay quiet and do nothing. So then I realized I had to be brave and strong to show the perpetrators I could live alone. " (W.S3).

At this stage, domestic violence survivors began to recall the good memories that had occurred in their lives. Although not easy, fun memories help them realize the strengths, abilities, and strengths they have. Like the subject of BE, who began to recall the good memories in his life. The memory encouraged him to rise from a slumped situation. It also helped him realize his expertise as a dentist. As for La, after remembering how his life was first, what were the happy memories he had passed before marriage, which was a strength for him to rise from his downturn and continue to work as a designer? In contrast to BE and La, who regain strength after reminiscing about beautiful memories in their lives, MW believes that his power is sourced from both himself and his child.

"Yes, of course, the source of my first happy child. Only the next is the ability I have myself; the future is still long, my age is still young, and I feel there are still many things I can do and find out there. " (W.S2)

5) The stage of being able to make decisions

Two things are a rational reason why the three domestic violence survivors can make decisions to divorce from husbands who have committed domestic violence against them. The first reason is the child, and the second is the awareness of their strength and potential. Understanding the strengths and possibilities that exist in themselves helps them rise and prove to the perpetrators that they can live alone. Like Be, who realized that she could live better without her husband, this made her decide to divorce and stop being used financially by her husband. This also applies to MW and LA. According to the existential perspective of humanitarianism, individuals who are fully aware and can make decisions to realize themselves as free creatures have choices and are responsible for these choices. Of course, this cannot be obtained quickly.

"I need years to rebuild my self-awareness that this relationship is not healthy and not good for me. But realizing it is not enough, I also need time to dare to make decisions. " (W.S2).

This study found that the self-awareness of domestic violence survivors affected divorce decision-making. This result is supported by the humanistic, existential theory that individuals can overcome difficulties and solve problems. Increased self-awareness of

domestic violence survivors can help them understand that they have the right to be protected from violence.

Patriarchal culture, misunderstanding of Islamic teachings regarding the obligations of husband and wife, as well as imbalances in the position and power in marriage, can be a justification for the husband to carry out domestic violence against his wife. Patriarchal culture places men as more dominant and influential in marriage relations. This makes the husband feel entitled to control his wife, including violence against him. Domestic violence also often occurs due to a misunderstanding of Islamic teachings, which state that the husband has the right to educate and guide his wife. This right is often misinterpreted as the right of the husband to punish his wife, including violence. The imbalance of power relations in marriage will make the husband feel more entitled to force his will on his wife.

Domestic violence survivors who experience violence by their husbands often feel confused and helpless. They think that they have no choice but to accept the violence they experience. Overall, the existential perspective of humanitarianism provides a positive outlook for domestic violence. This perspective helps the survivors of domestic violence to realize their strength and take the proper steps to build a better life [21], [22], [23]. The humanistic existential perspective reveals how self-awareness can develop through stages that include centralization of attention to the experience of domestic violence, sensitivity to vulnerable situations, understanding that negative emotions harm yourself, and awareness of self-strength and potential.

Focusing on the mental resources of domestic violence in domestic violence experience is the first step to increasing self-awareness [7]. Their status as victims and fear of violence became the center of attention of domestic violence survivors in the early stages. The feeling of anxiety experienced by domestic violence survivors is a response to the trauma they experienced. This fear gives rise to vigilance in the survivors so they can avoid dangerous situations. This vigilance then provides information to the rational thoughts of survivors. The neocortex identifies and translates the emotions and feelings experienced by each individual repeatedly, then gives them to rational thoughts [24], [25]. Rational thoughts will then consider this information and make the right decisions to improve the situation.

Domestic violence survivors can use their vigilance as a tool to protect themselves and prevent the recurrence of violence. The alert nature in an individual arises because the individual starts to be sensitive to the situation around him [24], [25]. This vigilance then

made the domestic violence survivors able to formulate logical reasons to leave their husbands who were domestic violence.

The five stages of the development of self-awareness illustrate how psychological complexity is involved in the decision-making process. The depressed situation requires that domestic violence survivors gradually restore and increase their self-awareness so that survivors can know the power they have. Increased self-awareness will also help the survivors of domestic violence in making decisions and be responsible for the decisions they make later.

In relation, self-awareness is the key that allows domestic violence survivors to take brave steps in ending toxic and abusive marriage relationships. Every domestic violence survivor has a unique experience in dealing with domestic violence, and their journey reflects the importance of a sensitive approach to individual contexts. This approach emphasizes the importance of listening to survivors' experiences, providing appropriate support, and connecting survivors with the resources needed. Divorce decision-making is a process that is not easy and personal because it is influenced by personal experience, family situation, and socio-economic background of survivors. For this reason, awareness of the internal and external strengths that exist in the survivors can be a supporting factor in making the decision.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the self-awareness of domestic violence plays a vital role in divorce decision-making. The three survivors of domestic violence, namely BE, MW, and La, agreed that self-awareness helps them recognize the strengths and weaknesses they have, makes them feel strong and empowered in the presence of domestic violence actors, and can help them make the best decisions for their lives, namely divorce from their husbands who have done domestic violence. In connection with this, the existential perspective of humanistic views that every individual can overcome difficulties and solve their problems. For this reason, self-awareness is essential for domestic violence survivors to dare to take action and break away from unhealthy domestic relations. Researchers found that there were at least 5 (five) stages that must be passed by domestic violence to develop their self-awareness, namely to focus

mental resources, be aware of vulnerable situations, realize that negative emotions can harm themselves, discover their strengths and potential, and Finally realized the ability to make decisions. In this context, the first step to building self-awareness is carried out by focusing the mental resources of domestic violence survivors on their fears and the awareness that they are victims. Researchers hope that every individual, not only the survivor of domestic violence, can increase self-awareness to overcome, avoid, and prevent bad things that can harm him.

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