

Trust Issues in Health Communication of Children in Street Situation

Masalah Kepercayaan dalam Komunikasi Kesehatan Anak di Situasi Jalanan

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Abstract

Children in street situations are a social problem faced in various cities in Indonesia. Efforts to protect children in street situations facing multiple issues. One of them is related to fulfilling the identity rights of children in street situations. This study aims to identify how a communication approach can foster interpersonal trust in children on the streets. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative using a phenomenology approach. There are many problems affecting confidence in children in street situations. It started from a lack of security and health issues that were not touched upon to the communication approach's problem. Communication intensity is the primary key to gaining interpersonal trust from children in street situations. Children's communication patterns in unique street situations also need to be responded to with a more informal approach. The actors involved need to reconsider the type of empowerment shown to children in street situations.

Keywords: Children in Street Situation; Communication Approach; Trust

Abstrak

Anak di situasi jalanan merupakan persoalan sosial yang banyak ditemui di berbagai kota di Indonesia. Upaya perlindungan anak di situasi jalanan menghadapi berbagai macam persoalan. Salah satu diantaranya terkait pemenuhan hak identitas anak-anak yang berada di situasi jalanan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana pendekatan komunikasi yang dapat menumbuhkan kepercayaan interpersonal pada anak di jalanan. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan yaitu deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi. Terdapat banyak masalah yang mempengaruhi kepercayaan pada anak di situasi jalanan. Mulai dari ketiadaan rasa aman, isu kesehatan yang kurang tersentuh hingga persoalan pendekatan komunikasi yang digunakan. Intensitas komunikasi menjadi kunci utama untuk memperoleh kepercayaan interpersonal dari anak-anak di situasi jalanan. Pola komunikasi anak di situasi jalanan yang unik juga perlu direspon dengan pendekatan yang lebih bersifat informal. Para aktor yang terlibat perlu mendesain ulang bentuk pemberdayaan yang ditujukan pada anak di situasi jalanan.

Kata Kunci: Anak Pada Situasi Jalanan; Kepercayaan; Pendekatan Komunikasi

Introduction

Generally, the condition of children in street situations is identified with the term street children. Street Children is a very complex phenomenon that is difficult to define (Gadd, 2016). There are many factors that underlie children opting to live on the streets. Among them are poverty factors, non-conducive family conditions, and various other factors. Children living on the streets are still viewed negatively by the general public.

The problem of street children is currently severe in various cities in Indonesia. The phenomenon of street children not only occurs in Indonesia but also occurs globally, especially in developing countries with low economic levels (Kartika & Utaridah Nanda, 2019). The problem gets more complicated when socially street children have relationships with various components, such as parents, the Social Service, the Police, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), assistants, open houses, coordinating bosses, and peers who are not only children but also adults. This complexity makes the policy for handling street children ambiguous (Kertati, 2018).

The results of the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) in 2017 showed that the national number of street children was around 4.8 million. Two years later, this figure had increased to 8.4%, so that the number of street children reached 9.1 million. In several regions in Indonesia, there are still many children in street situations who have not received maximum protection from the local government (Setiawan et al., 2016). Despite experiencing a downward trend, according to data from the Yogyakarta Special Region Social Service, the number of street children in DIY in 2020 was 72. However, if it is accumulated with data on the number of beggars, homeless people, children under five, and neglected children, the total number becomes 10,715. The existence of children in street situations is not only seen as an incidental or temporary problem but can be recognized as a social phenomenon that requires serious attention from various parties (Pas & Kartowagiran, 2018).

Children in street situations are often identified with poverty and lack of access to nutritious food (Nur'aini & Dewi, 2009). Most of the studies on street children also show that children in street situations are at greater risk of suffering psychological and biological damage than other poor children (Greksa et al., 2017). Children in street situations are also often identified as naughty children, rioters, troublemakers and various other stereotypes (Suci, 2017).

In certain situations, children do not have the option to accept their living conditions on the streets. Children in street situations become part of the class of society who are at the bottom of the social structure (Kartika & Utaridah Nanda, 2019). In fact, child protection is one of the priority policies in development programs at both the bilateral and multinational levels (Collins, 2017). However, social policies in the form of assistance programs are still difficult to design and reach with the naked eye (Setiawan et al., 2016).

Efforts to protect children in the street situation in Indonesia are currently experiencing various obstacles. Fulfilling the right to identity is one of the most difficult problems faced in fulfilling street children's rights and needs. Obstacles in fulfilling the identity rights of children on the streets are caused by two factors, namely because of the presence of children with disabilities on the streets and the dishonesty of the children themselves (Pas & Kartowagiran, 2018). Thus, access to social assistance for children on the streets still requires serious assistance. Constraints faced in fulfilling the right to identity generally occur due to the non-disclosure of the accompanying stakeholders. This is influenced by the issue of interpersonal beliefs of children on the

streets in the people they interact with.

Actors who have an important role in shaping the lives of children on the streets consist of other street children, people who do not live on the streets, police and, other non-living things such as knowledge, drugs and so on. These actors have a big impact in shaping the daily behavior patterns of children in street situations (Gadd, 2016).

Children on the streets do not just need support in the form of protection and social assistance. They also need emotional support and opportunities to interact openly. This aims to encourage the cognitive growth of children on the streets so that they are better prepared for the future.

On the streets, communication is often transmitted through body movements or non-verbal language. Many activities and decisions made by children on the streets are based on affective reactions to their surroundings. Therefore, to develop children's positive potential in street situations, interpersonal communication can be used as a means of controlling children's attitudes and behavior on the streets (Utami et al., 2012).

Like in other cities, Yogyakarta also faces the same problem related to children living in street situations. The local city government has issued several policies to reduce the high number of children on the streets. Apart from going through raids and social rehabilitation, the Yogyakarta Special Region government issued Regional Regulation No.1 of 2014 concerning the Handling of Homeless and Beggars to carry out control. However, the regulation is considered by some parties to be still ineffective in overcoming and providing protection for children on the streets.

Apart from formal regulations, the DIY government also relies on direct community involvement to reduce the number of children on the streets by placing an appeal not to donate to children who work as beggars on the streets. Open houses are also continuously optimized to assist social rehabilitation efforts for children in street situations through empowerment and financial assistance sourced from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the local Social Service. Yogyakarta City Government's policy to alleviate children from the road with special service education organized flexibly through informal and non-formal education is also not considered optimal (Syahrul & Wardana, 2018).

During a pandemic, children in street situations face an even worse problem. This raises other problems, such as the threat of homelessness, hunger, loss of livelihoods, and increasingly difficult access to health. Based on the results of a survey from the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH), due to the impact of the work from home (WFH) policy and social distancing, most children in street situations have switched professions to become street singers from begging or selling crackers (Agus Fujiyanto et al., 2020). In addition, children in street situations are also increasingly depressed by the imposition of curfews in Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At present, child empowerment and protection require an alternative model that can answer the problems of children on the streets and be more pro in the fulfillment of children's rights (Anasiru, 2011). However, to reach this stage, the actors involved need to build interpersonal trust with children in street situations. Several previous studies related to the issue of children in street situations discussed more on the aspects of knowledge, education, economy, and health. For example, research conducted by (Shephard, 2014) found that non-formal education interventions constitute a significant concern globally in dealing with children's problems in street situations. The communication dimension in social development studies has not received broad

attention (Obregón & Tufte, 2017).

The discourse of street children is independent of the practices it has emerged. The underlying assumption is that the definition of street children is determined by discourse, more precisely, formal discourse reports from organizations and official statistics. The dominant discourse does not envision building street children in discursive practices but internalizing the dominant image (Gigengack, 2014). Meanwhile, the results of research conducted by Bajar and Kuswarno (2020) demonstrate that the protection of children from the streets by government protection agencies must be carried out from street children's point of view that allows them to leave the streets. Based on some previous research, this study then examines the phenomenon of children in street situations from the aspect of health communication. This study aims to identify how a communication approach can foster interpersonal trust in children on the streets, so that the fulfillment of identity rights to provide protection and health assistance for children in street situations can be achieved.

Method

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative using a phenomenological approach. Littlejohn explains that phenomenology in the study of communication means letting things be real as they are, without imposing the categories of researchers on them (Littlejohn et al., 2005). Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations on the subjects studied. Determination of informants using the snowball sampling method, starting from the number of small informants to large until the number of samples, has met, and the data collected reaches the saturation point. The subjects in this study were children and adolescents in street situations who were accompanied by Harapan Fian. Harapan Fian is a volunteer-based organization in Yogyakarta that supports the fulfillment of children's rights, especially the right to identity and the Rights for Sexual and Reproductive Health (HKSR). Harapan Fian is a non-governmental organization supporting children and adolescents in street situations and engages in identity advocacy, reproductive health, alternative economics, and education.

The data analysis method used in this research is interactive data analysis. The first stage is data collection using interview and observation methods. The next process, namely data reduction, is carried out through selecting and summarizing the data that appears during the data collection process through interview and observation methods. Then the next stage is that the data that has been previously reduced is displayed in the form of narrative text. This data presentation is presented so that researchers can more easily understand the existing data. After the data is presented, the researcher verifies the existing data and then analyzes it and draws conclusions based on the phenomenon or event under study.

Results and Discussion

The streets are identical to poverty and dangerous spaces. The children in the environment were marked as poor (Aufseeser, 2020). Children in street situations are not limited to those who are nomadic or homeless. Marginalized groups in the suburbs of urban villages are also categorized as children in street situations.

Health communication research is experiencing a shift in focus at the macro level among non-health professionals (Hannawa et al., 2015). This research was conducted by observing the reality of children in street situations in the Yogyakarta Special Region.

The problems faced by children in street situations are still the same, namely problems of education, economy, health, and so on. However, aid interventions for children in street situations focus mainly on education and the economy. The health aspect is often overlooked by relevant stakeholders.

Identification of Child Health Communication Issues in Street Situations

Age development determines and affects health issues in children in street situations. In their teens, children in street situations face new problems, such as reproductive health issues, family conflicts, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancies (KTD), and others. Children in street situations who are female have more and more complex burdens related to reproductive health issues. Meanwhile, children in street situations who are male are more focused on domestic issues such as earning money and becoming the head of the household. The following is the case data for the assistance carried out by the Harapan Fian Association related to health issues faced by children in street situations:

Cases	Total
Unplanned pregnancy	2
Teenager pregnancy	4
Give birth	4
IUD birth control	3
Reproduction health	6
Criminality	2
Dating violence	1
Domestic violence	1
General health	10
Vaccine	12
Identity advocacy	7
B package	4
A package	2
Total	

***Note**

A & B Package are non formal education

Data are collected from August 2018 to July 2019

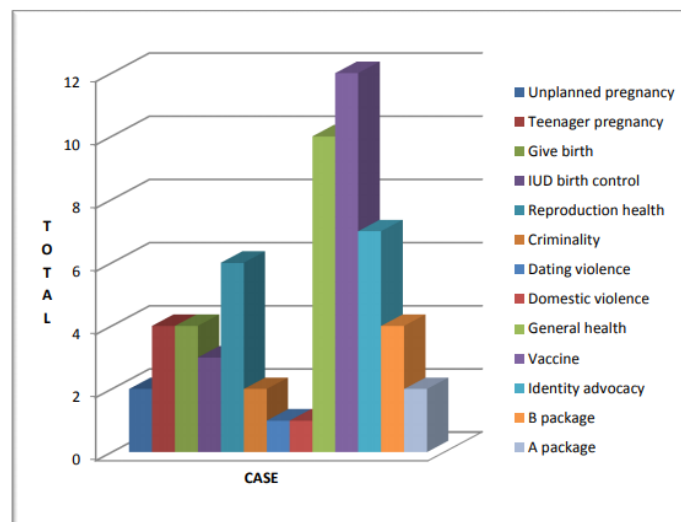


Figure 1. Data on cases of child assistance in street situations in 2018-2019
(source: Fian Hope Association annual report)

The data above shows several issues that occur, especially for children in street situations in Yogyakarta. Some of the issues that are of major concern to children in street situations are health and identity. For health consultations related to reproduction, children in street situations who are female are more likely to consult with the same sexes. Meanwhile, the male sex, although they have a reasonably open view regarding reproductive health issues, are more closed in sharing problems they face related to reproductive health.

Gender differences are important, indeed. So, there are still differences in the patterns of men and women. For fellow women, the process can be smoother and more open. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

Apart from health issues, the thing that hinders the development process of children in street situations is the problem of lack of identity. This happened because some of their parents also did not have an identity. As a result, children in street situations have difficulty accessing social assistance that requires identity data

collection as an administrative requirement. Children in street situations do not have many options in asking for help to solve the health problems they face. As happened to children in street situations in Yogyakarta, some of them revealed that they experienced difficulties in accessing assistance provided by the local government.

A survey conducted by the Harapan Fian Association shows that the problem of identity continues to rise among children in street situations. This happens along with the age development of children in street situations. In 2018, there were only seven cases of the absence of a child's identity in street situations. Then at the end of 2019 towards 2020, cases of no identity increased to 15 cases. The problem of child identity in street situations is due to the absence of a birth certificate, resulting in not knowing the date of birth and age of the child in street situations. In addition, some parents of children in street situations also do not have identity cards such as National Identity Cards and Family Certificates. Hence, the problem is then passed down to their children.



Figure 2. Cases increased of child assistance in street situations in 2018-2019
(source: Fian Hope Association annual report)

The available assistance has also focused on children in street situations who are under 17 years of age. Children in street situations who have reached their teenage years still rarely get more attention from related stakeholders. In fact, children in street situations who are teenagers have more complex problems. Not only that, the existence of families and parents of children in street situations is also often neglected. In fact, child protection is one of the priority policies in development programs at both the bilateral and multinational levels (Collins, 2017). However, social policies in the form of assistantship programs are still challenging to design and reach (Setiawan et al., 2016).

The biggest challenge comes because the government provides irrational terms. Identity cards are one of the main obstacles for children in street situations when it is difficult to access government assistance. Children in street situations, without their identity, cannot go to school, rent a place to live, access health clinics, etc. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

Generally, social assistance for street children is accessed through open houses. The admission of several children in street situations, that several open houses have actually become places of violence both physically and verbally. Several children in street situations revealed that they had been arrested and detained. Some open houses also tend to be repressive in dealing with children in street situations. They also consider some institutions to use an interpersonal communication approach that is less friendly, too formal, not open, and intense.

This results in children living in street situations less comfortable with open houses. Violence against children appears as an almost perfect advocacy construct because it includes everything related to child protection (Poretti et al., 2014). Many factors play a role in pushing children into street situations, such as the home environment that is not conducive, poverty, the allure of freedom, drugs, and an environment that is not controlled by adults (Joanou, 2014). This is what also encourages some children in Yogyakarta to choose the street as an alternative space for their lives. Apart from the streets, some children in street situations who were the subjects in this study also revealed that they are more comfortable with the existence of a shelter or safe house that is the base camp where they live. The concept of a safe house is different from the concept of a halfway house. These safe houses usually emerge through community initiatives or the help of volunteers they trust. The existence of a shelter or safe house is a space that can make communication with children in street situations even more intense.

Some halfway house administrators were less open about the assistance provided. For example, I want to take my younger sibling's aid, but they do not allow, Even though I am his biological brother. At the halfway house, they were only given money after they had been photographed. There is no further follow up. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. R and Mr. A. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

According to Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, children as the young generation, potential, and successors in the future generations and as special characteristics, must be protected from all forms of inhuman treatment that result in human rights violations. Children's rights are an integral part of Human Rights (Human Rights) related to the role of the state, so each country has an obligation to protect, fulfill, and respect children's rights (Hasanah & Putri, 2019). The issue of safety for child protection in street situations needs to be a severe concern to the actors involved in it.

Some considerations need to be taken into account when providing assistance to children in street situations: never give promises, hopes, nor excessive material. Such giving can lead to dependence that has the potential to lead to disappointment in street children if these expectations are not achieved. As stated by Didin, chairman of the Harapan Fian Association, who is one of the assistants for children in street situations:

Most importantly, don't give each other hope. If first one is given, then everyone will call. So don't give something that can cause dependence on them. We also made this in the Self Guardian Policy guide. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

To develop the positive potential of children in street situations, interpersonal communication can be used to control children's attitudes and behavior (Utami et al., 2012). However, to reach this stage, the actors involved need to build interpersonal trust with children in street situations. The approach used to gain the trust of children in street situations can use informal communication. In fact, children in street situations are not only able to survive on the streets but are also able to empower themselves and create economic opportunities for themselves and their families (Van Buggenhout, 2020).

We always advise volunteers when they go to the field not to bring a lot of money and give money. There was once a case of a film producer who promised a certain amount of money when making a street child film. But what was given did not match, and he ran away. Based on some of these experiences, we began to set what can be done and not. You can give, but don't make them dependent. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

In every communication process that occurs, language sometimes becomes a communication barrier for children in street situations. So, it is necessary to simplify the language when communicating with children in street situations. Examples of communication failure cases that are often experienced by children in street situations are when they check their health conditions with medical personnel. Children in street situations find it difficult to understand what the doctors and nurses who treat them say. Often, there is miscommunication, which results in misunderstanding and uncertainty in the health care they live. An informal approach is recommended because children in street situations tend to use daily social language.

The challenge in communicating with children in street situations is in language. If possible, use language that is easy for them to understand. Communication intensity is also very influential when communicating with them. If possible, the language and the way of delivery are as simple as possible because our school backgrounds are different from ours. So the way to communicate is also different. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

Interpersonal Trust in Child Health Communication in Street Situations

Some children in street situations also have problems communicating due to mental retardation or below-average intelligence. This happens because of the family heredity factor. Most of the studies on street children also show that children in street situations are at greater risk of suffering psychological and biological damage compared to other poor children (Greksa et al., 2017). Therefore, in the process of approaching children in street situations, a high intensity of communication is needed to gain their trust, as seen in the image below:

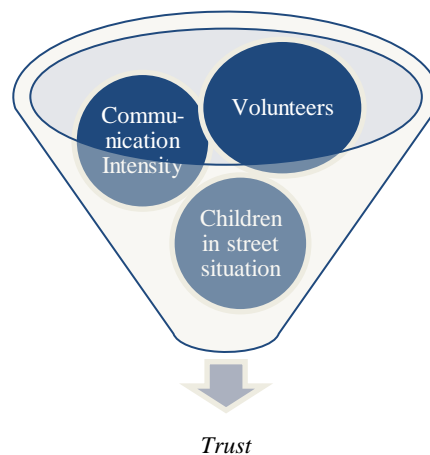


Figure 3. Process of forming children's interpersonal trust in street situations (source: data analysis)

The closeness and intensity of communication with children in street situations significantly affect their confidence and openness regarding the health issues they face. To provide effective communication in building public awareness, group communication practices start from building trust (Rasyid, Tunggal, et al., 2020). Children in street situations who are female tend to be more open than boys. This openness is only obtained when they already know and feel close to volunteers or people who accompany them. Volunteers who are active and long enough to accompany children in street situations become figures they trust. Children's trust in street situations is more in personal figures, not in institutions or organizations. Intense communication is a key factor in the emergence of figures who become trusted figures for children in street situations. The message planning process, channel selection, and communication media, as well as communication approaches and styles are also some important things that need to be considered (Rasyid, Wijiharto Tunggal, et al., 2020).

Children in street situations are quite active in using social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Social media is also a communication tool to express oneself and seek the attention of others. This communication pattern is a response that arises when children in street situations do not care about them from their surroundings.

Children in street situations can become very mature/adult because they could already have two children at 15. The approach that was made should be, as much as possible, not hurt their feelings. If possible, the approach used is more fluid, for example, using music that is close to them. The method of attract them will certainly be different if you use formal and informal approaches. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

Children in street situations have different communication experiences with children at their age who grow up in a supportive environment. Their communication experience is influenced by open and uncompromising environmental factors. High and sensitive competition and conflict problems that arise make them adapt to various communication styles and strategies to avoid conflict (Bajar & Kuswarno, 2020). Children in street situations usually live in precarious conditions. Their survival depends on creativity and the ability to interpret others' actions and generate or generate sentiments such as fear, trust, and respect for others (Gadd, 2019).

Children in street situations have ambiguous beliefs about moral values. In general, children in street situations are sexually active group. However, they believe that the concept of infidelity, abortion, or changing partners is wrong. In fact, they often correct each other. So, the moral standards they adhere to are more or less the same as the society in general. Children in street situations imitate more or less what is applied by society. Rasyid, E. (Interviewer) & Mr. D, Miss. R and Miss F. (Interviewee). 2020. [Interview Transcript]

Children in street situations have their own constructs related to their moral standards and values. Some of these passages imitate the moral constructs believed by the general public. For example, the belief that abortion is not allowed, adultery is a negative act, and the belief to avoid unplanned pregnancies (KTD). Although KTD cases still often occur in the community of children in street situations. This shows that there are differences in self-concept among children in street situations. The values held by children in street situations can be an entry point to understand the problems they face. Health communication studies have undergone a transition from an objective model to a subjective model. This condition is triggered by the complexity of people's lives who are increasingly aware that knowing the point of view of the topic under study is very important in building efficient and empathic communication (Mulyana et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Age development affects the complexity of problems faced by children in street situations. New problems emerge, such as reproductive health, issues of identity, and a sense of security. The results of this study indicate that the health issues faced by children in street situations have been lost from the attention of responsible stakeholders. The actors involved need to build interpersonal trust with children in street situations so that they are willing to be open to the problems at hand. The approach used to gain this trust can use informal communication, especially on issues related to health communication.

This study generally provides an overview of the realities faced by children in street situations. Communication intensity is the key to gaining interpersonal trust and understanding the problems faced by children in street situations. Children's communication patterns in unique street situations need to be responded to with a more informal approach. This is a way to reduce various kinds of uncertainty that arise due to several communication disorders experienced by children in street situations, whether it is due to language or problems related to their psychological condition. Specific suggestions to be conveyed in this study are the actors involved and responsible need to redesign the form of empowerment shown to children in street situations.

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