

## Description of The Psychological Condition of Adolescents With Social Problems and Bullying

Setya Rahayu<sup>1</sup>, Erizza Farizan Adani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*

<sup>2</sup>*Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*

[Setya.22190@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:Setya.22190@mhs.unesa.ac.id); [erizzaadani@unesa.ac.id](mailto:erizzaadani@unesa.ac.id)

**Abstract:** Dysfunctional families and experiences of bullying can contribute to social problems and emotional instability in adolescents. This article analyzes the psychological condition of a 16 year old adolescent who exhibits withdrawal, self-harming behaviors, and suicidal ideation, exacerbated by conflicts with their mother and the infidelity of a stepfather. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study analysis, referencing Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and psychological tests, indicating that the subject struggles to build healthy social relationships, along with feelings of inferiority and helplessness. The results show that dissatisfaction with the ideal self-image and traumatic experiences contribute to self-harming behaviors and suicidal tendencies. These findings highlight the importance of social support and emotional understanding in adolescent psychological development, as well as the need for interventions to address the negative impacts of family environments and bullying. This research provides insights into how these factors interact and affect individual mental health.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalytic Theory, Dysfunctional Family, Social Issues, Bullying

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period in which individuals experience physical, social, and psychological maturation accompanied by emotional development and the ability to adapt to their environment (Hanifah et al., 2023). According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the adolescent age range is between 10 and 19 years old (Firdaus & Marsudi Muhammad Sholeh, 2021). According to Hurlock (1980), psychologically, adolescence is the age at which individuals integrate with adult society and are on the same level as the adults around them (Hanifah et al., 2023). During the developmental period, the social environment, including the peer environment, can influence adolescent personality. It is not uncommon for adolescents to spend more time with their friends than with their families (Hanifah et al., 2023). Therefore, social skills are needed to facilitate individuals' interactions in their social environment (Hanifah et al., 2023).

According to Hurlock, social ability refers to an individuals diplomatic relationship with other, which enables them to develop pleasant social attitudes (Rahmatunnisa, 2019). Goleman defines social ability as an individual's capacity to regulate emotional conditions, calm oneself when angry, maintain good relationship with others, and demonstrate empathy (Rahmatunnisa, 2019). Furthermore, Gardner explains that social ability is an individual's capacity to initiate, build, and sustain social relationships in a way that is mutually beneficial (Rahmatunnisa, 2019). Thus, social ability can be understood as a set of skills that enable individuals to interact effectively with others. These skills include communication, empathy, cooperation and the ability to establish positive relationships (Rahmatunnisa, 2019). An individual with well-developed social abilities can adapt more easily to their environment. In contrast, individuals with poor social abilities are often influenced by several factors, one of which is the presence of a non-intact family structure, such as divorce or ongoing family conflict. Such conditions may lead to emotional instability, which can hinder an individual's ability to interact with others (Detta & Abdullah, 2017). These circumstances arise from feelings

of instability and insecurity, often resulting in disorganized behavior, aggression and juvenile delinquency as a response to an unstable family environment (Putri, 2023). Families lacking harmony typically struggle to understand each other's emotions or to effectively communicate their needs and expectations, which may cause children to feel misunderstood by their family (Putri, 2023). Individuals raised in disharmonious and conflict-ridden families tend to experience difficulties in interacting with others, forming healthy relationships, and understanding social norms (Putri, 2023).

The inability of an individual to interact socially can also be caused by bullying. Bullying is defined as an act of oppression or violence intentionally carried out by an individual or a group of individuals who are more powerful or dominant, with the aim of inflicting harm and doing so repeatedly (Tang et al., 2020). Bullying behavior can occur in various settings such as schools, workplaces, and communities, and it can lead to significant psychological problems for the victims (Tang et al., 2020). A study conducted by Olweus (2013) indicates that victims of bullying may experience a range of psychological issues, including depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. There are various forms of bullying, including physical bullying, verbal bullying, social exclusion, cyberbullying, sexual bullying and relational bullying, such as threatening to end a friendship or manipulating someone's social interactions (Tang et al., 2020). According to Sani Budianti Hermawan, a child and family psychologist, individuals who experience bullying are at risk of developing psychological problems later in life, such as emotional suffering, feelings of humiliation, neglect, worthlessness, depression, and in severe cases, suicidal tendencies (Tang et al., 2020).

The condition of a dysfunctional family and experiences of bullying can be contributing factors for an individual to experience social problems due to their inability to adapt to their environment, leading to emotional instability. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyze the psychological condition of patients facing social issues and bullying through a theoretical analysis using Karen Horney's Psychoanalytic Theory. The primary objective of this report is to analyze the psychological condition of adolescents who grow up in dysfunctional families, resulting in social problems and bullying. Previous research has highlighted the critical role of interpersonal relationship and social factors in shaping an individual's personality and mental health (Kurniati et al., 2015). Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs for love, attention and recognition from one's environment. When the needs are unmet, individuals may experience dissatisfaction that can lead to psychological disturbances.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Subject selection in this case was done randomly by observing the phenomena occurring in the subjects. The subject in this case is a 16-year-old adolescent who has recently exhibited complaints of becoming withdrawn, often isolating themselves and experiencing difficulties in interacting with peers. The subject has also engaged in self-harm on several occasions and has made attempts at suicide. Additionally, the subject has faced bullying in the form of being ostracized by friends. According to the subject's mother, the underlying cause of these behaviors is frequent conflicts between the subject and the mother, who tends to prioritize her own ego and emotions. Furthermore, the subject's biological father has been absent since childhood, and the stepfather has been unfaithful to the mother.

The type of research used in this article is qualitative research employing a case study analysis approach in depth and contextually. In case study analysis, researchers explore a specific case to gain deeper insights into the issues or problems being studied. Utilizing a case study approach allows researchers to understand the factors influencing the situation and provides a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Yusanto, 2019). According to Suwendra, in qualitative research, theory serves as the foundation for analyzing problems occurring in the social environment; furthermore, theory is often referred to as the basis for examining phenomena related to social life (Yusanto, 2019). The case analysis in this article employs Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships and social factors in the emotional development and mental health of individuals (Kurniati et al., 2015). The data in this article were collected through direct observation, interviews, and mental health

psychological tests, which included MMPI, WARTEGG, Graphics Test, SSCT, EPPS and WWQ. The results of this data collection process indicate that the subject has social issues and a history of bullying.

### 3 RESULTS

Based on the results of interviews conducted by the examining psychologist, data was obtained showing that the subject became quiet when at home, isolated himself while at the boarding house, and had difficulty socializing or interacting with his peers. The subject also experienced bullying at the boarding house. As a result, the mother suspected that the subject's quiet demeanor was caused by problems at home, where the subject was the first to discover his stepfather's affair. In addition, the subject exhibited self-harming behavior and had attempted suicide. During the interview, the subject also mentioned that he rarely left the house and spent most of his time at home with his mother.

Based on the data obtained from the observations, it can be concluded that the subject has a well-groomed appearance and is cooperative during the data collection process. Additionally, the subject demonstrates compos mentis awareness and good memory. Currently, the subject has suicidal ideation and impulses toward antisocial behavior, and the subject also exhibits self-harming behaviors and suicide attempts.

Based on the results of the psychological tests conducted on the subject, it can be concluded that the subject is dissatisfied with their current state, withdraws from society, lacks self-confidence, and prefers to be alone. Additionally, the subject's "Affiliation" need in the EPPS test is categorized very low, clearly indicating that the subject has difficulty in establishing social relationships with others. The subject also harbors fears regarding how others perceive them. In the results of the SSCT test, it can be seen that the subject's goal or desire is to have a complete family and to live in peace and happiness. In the graphic test results, the subject's drawings appear blurred, vague, and faded, indicating that the subject experiences emotional instability, feeling anxious and unsafe in expressing themselves.

### 4 DISCUSSIONS

The events experienced by the subject can be analyzed using Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships with social factors in the development of personality and mental health (Regita & Indarti, 2021). The subject in this case exhibits instability in their relationship with their parents, particularly with their mother, who does not understand their feelings. This aligns with Horney's view that parental relationships that fail to provide a sense of security can have negative effects on a child's psychological well-being in the future (Kurniati et al., 2015). The mother's inability to provide emotional support and understanding to the subject created feelings of low self-esteem and helplessness, which are manifestations of basic anxiety according to Horney (Regita & Indarti, 2021). When the subject learned about her stepfather's infidelity, the trust and security that should have existed within the family dynamics were further shaken, exacerbating the subject's emotional condition.

Karen Horney also explains that there are three styles individuals use to cope with conflict (Alwisol, 2014), namely: 1. Moving closer to others, which is an effort to overcome the feelings of helplessness experienced by the individual. For those who have experienced failure and mistakes in love and affection, moving closer to others is very necessary in order to find a partner who can take responsibility for their life. 2. Moving against others, which is an attempt to eliminate anxiety. This behavior tends to be carried out by attacking others in order to become strong and respected. 3. Moving away from others, which is a fundamental way to resolve conflicts by choosing to separate oneself from others. Closeness to others can create painful experiences, so some people choose to distance themselves from others and build their own world. The strategy used by the subject to resolve this conflict is to withdraw from their social environment. This reflects one of the three strategies identified by Horney, namely "moving away from others." This withdrawal becomes a way for the subject to avoid the pain associated with betrayal and uncertainty in relationships. In this context, withdrawal is not only a defense mechanism but also a response to the traumatic experiences endured by the subject.

The subject's difficulty in building healthy social relationships causes them to become targets of bullying, which in turn reinforces feelings of worthlessness and rejection (Regita & Indarti, 2021). This shows how interpersonal conflicts can trigger intrapsychic conflicts, where the subject feels trapped between the desire to connect with others and the fear of judgment and rejection from others. In this case, the subject develops defensive behavior patterns, such as avoiding social interaction, which is an attempt to protect themselves from emotional pain (Regita & Indarti, 2021). The subject's actions of attempting suicide and self-harm can be understood as expressions of self-hatred (Regita & Indarti, 2021). The absence of a father figure and a poor relationship with the mother contribute to the subject's feelings of alienation from their family. This sense of helplessness creates a psychological condition that tends toward self-harm, as a form of venting the frustration experienced (Alwisol, 2014). The act of self-harm can be seen as a manifestation of the conflict between the ideal self-image and the reality experienced.

The ideal self-image is an effort to resolve conflicts by creating a positive image of oneself. This image depends on each individual's environment, which is full of love and warmth, thereby having a positive impact on their self-image (Regita & Indarti, 2021). There are three aspects that form the ideal self according to Horney in Regita & Indarti (2021), namely 1) the neurotic search for grandeur, which is the belief in the ideal self that they use as their life goal, self-concept, and even their relationships with others, 2) the neurotic demand, where neurotic individuals typically build their world through imagination, believing that there is something wrong with the outside world, therefore, neurotics consider themselves special and must be treated according to their ideal self-image, 3) neurotic pride, where neurotics have misplaced pride not based on a realistic self-view but on an ideal self-image.

The subject's ideal self-image is to have a loving and supportive family, as well as sincere friendships without betrayal, reflecting their search for an ideal self-image. Dissatisfaction with their unfulfilled ideal self-image is the main source of the subject's self-hatred..

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and psychological tests, the subject exhibits issues related to social environment and bullying; however, it is still uncertain what specific disorder the subject may be experiencing due to the incomplete assessment process. Nonetheless, the social problems faced by the subject are linked to an unsupportive social environment and a dysfunctional family relationship, which adversely affect the subject's emotional development. The subject's knowledge of their stepfather's infidelity serves as a primary trigger that exacerbates their mental condition, leading to feelings of inferiority, helplessness, and a tendency to withdraw from social interactions. Additionally, the subject experiences profound emotional conflict with their mother, further worsening their psychological state. The subject also demonstrates self-harming behaviors and suicide attempts as a means expressing frustration and dissatisfaction with themselves.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all parties involved in this research, particularly to :

1. God Almighty for His endless grace and guidance bestowed upon me.
2. Ms. Erizza Farizan Adani, S.Psi., M.Psi., Psychologist, as my Field Supervisor.
3. Ms. Amelia Choirun Nisa', S.Psi., M.Psi., Psychologist, as the Field Supervisor at Hospital X.
4. Ms. Z, as my subject.
5. My parents, who always pray for me and provide love, care and encouragement.
6. And the last my friends, who continuously motivate me in preparing this research report.

## REFERENCES

- Alwisol. (2014). *Psikologi Kepribadian (Edisi Revisi)*. UMM Press.
- Detta, B., & Abdullah, S. M. (2017). DINAMIKA RESILIENSI REMAJA DENGAN KELUARGA BROKEN HOME. *InSight*, 09. <https://ejurnal.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id/index.php/psikologi/article/view/600/390>
- Kurniati, I. D., Setiawan, R., Rohmani, A., Lahdji, A., Tajally, A., Ratnaningrum, K., Basuki, R., Reviewer, S., & Wahab, Z. (2015). *Buku Ajar*.
- Putri, A. P. (2023). DISORGANISASI KELUARGA MEMPENGARUHI PERKEMBANGAN KEPERIBADIAN ANAK. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya (SEBAYA)*, 3. <https://e-journal.unmas.ac.id/index.php/sebaya/article/view/6966/5306>
- Rahmatunnisa, S. (2019). KELEKATAN ANTARA ANAK DAN ORANG TUA DENGAN KEMAMPUAN SOSIAL. *Yaa Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Din*, 3. <https://jurnal.umj.ac.id/index.php/YaaBunayya/article/view/5567/3770>
- Regita, R. D., & Indarti, T. (2021). Konflik Intrapsikis Tokoh Utama dalam Novel-Novel Karya Syahid Muhammad (Teori psikoanalisis Karen Horney). *Bapala*, 8(6), 57–68.
- Tang, I., Supraha, W., & Rahman, I. K. (2020). Upaya mengatasinya perilaku perundungan pada usia remaja. *Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah*, 14. <https://ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/JPLS/article/view/3804/2275>
- Yusanto, Y. (2019). Ragam Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif. *Journal of Scientific Communication*, 1(1). <https://jurnal.untirta.ac.id/index.php/jsc/article/view/7764/5253>
- Firdaus, W., & Marsudi Muhammad Sholeh. (2021). Konseling Remaja yang Kecanduan Gadget Melalui Terapi Kognitif Behavior. *Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Mahasiswa*, 6(1).
- Hanifah, A., Saripah, I., & Nadhira, N. A. (2023). Peran Perilaku Asertif terhadap Keterampilan Berkomunikasi Remaja. *Edu Consilium: Jurnal BK Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 16–28.