

ATTRIBUTION ERROR TO THE VICTIM IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CONTEMPLATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OBSERVER

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the attitudes toward the violence, conducted by a husband to wife, focus on victim-blaming. In this study, the effect of demographic factors on the violence and victim-blaming was also analyzed. The respondents of this study were 458 college students aged 18 to 32 years. Two measuring instruments were used, namely: IBWB (Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating) and DVBS (Domestic Violence Blame Scale). The data was analyzed using stepwise regression, and the result shows a relationship between attitudes about violence against wife and victim-blaming ($r = -.41, p < .001$). Independent t-test of ANOVA shows the higher level of bias of gender role on the male as female. ANOVA and independent t test show that men have a higher level of gender role bias, but there is no significant difference in marital status or religion in blaming the victim. Stepwise regression analysis showed $R^2 = .03$ for the gender variable, and $R^2 = .20$. The $R^2 = .20$ is a contribution from two variables, namely husband's violent attitude to wife and gender. This can lead to the victim blaming in a domestic violence case. The implications of the findings are also discussed.

Keywords: victim blaming; wife beating; domestic violence

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui regresi sikap terhadap kekerasan suami terhadap istri pada atribusi kesalahan korban. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis regresi faktor demografis terhadap kekerasan terhadap istri oleh suami dan atribusi kesalahan pada korban. Subjek penelitian adalah 458 mahasiswa berusia antara 18 sampai 32 tahun. Pengukuran dilakukan dengan menggunakan IBWB (*Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating*) dan DVBS (*Domestic Violence Blame Scale*). Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi *stepwise* menghasilkan hubungan antara sikap terhadap kekerasan terhadap istri dan menyalahkan korban ($r = -0,41, p < 0,001$). Tes ANOVA dan *independent t test* menunjukkan bahwa pria memiliki tingkat bias peran gender yang lebih tinggi, namun tidak ada perbedaan signifikan dalam status perkawinan atau agama dalam menyalahkan korban. Analisis regresi *stepwise* menunjukkan $R^2 = 0,03$ untuk variabel jenis kelamin dan $R^2 = 0,20$ untuk variabel sikap kekerasan suami terhadap istri dan jenis kelamin. Hal ini dapat mengarah pada penyalahan korban dalam kasus KDRT. Implikasi temuan juga dibahas.

Kata kunci: atribusi penyalahan pada korban; kekerasan terhadap istri; kekerasan dalam rumah tangga

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a severe violation of human rights. Various researchers report a widespread of domestic violence, especially violence against women, occurring in multiple parts of the world with diverse social - demographic backgrounds (Devries, Mak, Garcia-Moreno, Petzold, Child, Falder, & Watts, 2013). The impact of violence is sometimes also manifested in physical aspects. The violence impact of physical

injuries can be categorized as direct and indirect (Wong & Mellor, 2014). Wong & Mellor (2014) suggest the direct physical impacts of violence include injuries, bruises, and death, while indirect impacts include chronic illnesses and poor health behaviors. Wives, who have experienced domestic violence, are at risk of physical injury, sexual and reproductive organ injuries, and suicidal tendencies (Trevillio, Oram, Feder, & Howard, 2012). Moreover, they also tend to live with anxiety, depression, and low levels

of self-confidence (Trevillion, et al, 2015); (Howard, Trevillion, & Agnew-Davies, 2010). The resulting survey of WHO in many countries describe 10-69% of women report physical violence they have experienced, which were conducted by their partners (Wong & Mellor, 2014).

The prevalence of domestic violence in Indonesia is high. According to the data of The National Commission on Violence Against Woman (Komnas Perlindungan Perempuan) in year 2016 - 2018, the violence against women increased, from 259.150 to 348.446 reported cases (CATAHU, 2018). Furthermore, according to the Women Commission (CATAHU, 2018), the number of violence in East Java was the second highest after Jakarta, with 1536 cases reported in East Java and 1999 cases reported in Jakarta. In many cases of violence against women in Indonesia are explicitly and implicitly still tolerated by traditional and religious values. The violence phenomenon is not considered as a crime or an extraordinary case (Nilan, Demartoto, Broom, & Germov, 2014). This phenomenon shows that domestic violence is a common problem experienced by women in Indonesia. Also, an important point to be aware is, violence against women result impacts such as death, suicide attempts, HIV/ AIDS infection, health problem, chronic illness, mental disorders, unhealthy behaviors and reproductive health disorders (Sutrisminah, 2012).

Putra & Pradnyani (2018) revealed that in 2016, as many as 12.3% of married women aged 15-64, experienced violence by their husbands. Nevertheless, this number does not represent all cases in Indonesia because of unreported cases. Most domestic violence is not reported to the authorities. In Indonesian society, there is also an interesting phenomenon about the tendency to hold assumptions that the victims are the guilty party (Stromwall, Alfredsson, & Landstrom, 2013). After the victim experienced violence, the victim is considered as a trigger of the

problem, or she caused the occurrence of the violence. Consequently, she is to blame. Furthermore, the feminist dialectics point of view holds that violence against women is understood as a manifestation of patriarchal culture in the social system that places men in the most powerful positions and so they have the right to take control over women because they perceive that women have lower status and power than men (Arief, 2018).

Whatley in Russell (2017) explains, to understand the incidence of rape or sexual violence, many people try to justify that occurred crime. Several theories describe the phenomenon of attribution error towards victims. The popular theory of belief in a fair world explains that the world is a safe and pleasant place. This thought leads to belief that good things will happen to good people and bad things to bad people. So, if something terrible happened to someone, it is because the person deserves to receive it (Stromwall et al., 2013).

Another reason for unreported domestic violence is the embarrassed feeling of the victim. They feel loss and shame once they report the incident. Furthermore, they feel uncomfortable reporting the flaw of their household to strangers and do not want to involve strangers in their personal life (Tarling & Morris, 2010).

Domestic violence cases are unique in each case because people with different backgrounds experience it. The way people perceive domestic violence in the environment leads to an increase or decrease in the number of domestic violence (Valor-Segura, Exposito, & Moya, 2011). The attitude of blaming the victim could encourage the perpetrator to do domestic violence and could cause uncomfortable feelings and also lead to complications or difficulties in fighting domestic violence.

In order to understand the reason for not considering victims of domestic violence as

vulnerable and innocent and reason for inflicting error on victims, it is important to know the process in which the community forms the construct and definition of the victim (Meyer, 2015). In addition, the observers, as uninvolved parties, consider that domestic violence could be influenced by the situation and place, where the domestic violence could occur. These will affect the consideration in determining the guilty party. This study aims to find empirical support for attitudes about violence, conducted by husbands, and victims blaming in Indonesian culture. The collected data will be analyzed using one-way ANOVA, t-test, Pearson Product Moment correlation test, and stepwise multiple regression.

METHOD

The respondents of the study are students from University X. The data were collected in six faculties. From 672 distributed questionnaires, only data from 458 questionnaires could be used and involved in this study, because of age criteria. The range of respondent's age is between 18 to 32 years old with $M = 21$ years. The majority of respondents are female, Muslim, and single.

In this study, two instruments were adapted from IBWB and DVBS. IBWB (Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating) is used to measure the husband's violent attitude against his wife. This instrument was constructed by Saunders and colleagues in 1987. Instead of 'attitude' the word 'belief' was used in order to form the impression of uncontroversial or unalarming (Saunders, 1987). In the extended version, there are five subscales consisting of 36 items. The five subscales are 1) WJ (Wife Beating is Justified), 2) WG (Wife Gain from Beating), 3) HG (Help Should Be Given), 4) OP (Offender Should be Punish), 5) OR (Offender is Responsible). This study was using the short version of the IBWB scale, consisting of 11 items, three favorable items, and five unfavorable items. The short version consists of two dimensions, namely WJ

(Wife Beating is Justified) with three favorable items, and HG (Help Should Be Given), with five unfavorable items. Six points Likert scale were used in this tool, which 1 refers to "strongly agree" to 6 refers to "strongly disagree." The high score indicates the high support for domestic violence, conducted by a husband to wife (Cho, 2007). By dropping four items, item number two, nine, ten, and eleven, a reliability estimation of 0.61 was obtained.

DVBS (Domestic Violence Blame Scale) was created to measure the attribution of errors to victims of domestic violence. This scale was constructed by Bryant & Spencer in 2003. The items in this study refer to a predetermined study conducted by Petretic-Jackson and colleagues in 1994. If the error is related to the situation, then the subject tends to blame the situation or context of domestic violence. If the error is related to the perpetrator, it means that the subject believes in the error of the perpetrator, so the perpetrator is blamed. If the attribution of error is concerned with the community, the social values are considered as the causes of domestic violence. If the attribution of error is concerned with the victim, the subjects blame the victim for the occurrence of domestic violence. The victims are blamed for provoking violence, deserve violence, or they just exaggerate the violence (the victim plays victim). The reliability estimation for Victim Blaming Dimension on Domestic Violence Blame Scale, that measure victim-blaming is 0.74. This study focuses on the attribution of errors in domestic violence, and uses only the victim dimension in the DVBS scale. The questionnaire consists of 23 items. Every item uses a six-points Likert scale, with 1 refers to strongly disagree to 6 refers to strongly agree. The higher the value is, the more agree the subject with the given statement.

The analysis of the data used one-way ANOVA, t test, Pearson Product Moment correlation test, and stepwise multiple regression. One-way ANOVA analysis and t-

test were used to measure the regression of demographic variables (sex, religion, and marital status) on two main variables, while the Pearson correlation method and step-wise multiple regression were used to determine the strength of the relations between variables and the direction of the relationship. Stepwise regression was used to develop a subset of independent variables that are useful for estimating dependent variables and eliminating independent variables that do not provide useful information (Tabanick & Fidell, 2007).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As much as 458 participants (m = 21 years old) were involve in this study. The majority of the participants are female, Muslim and single. The participants were undergraduate and graduate students from various faculties of University X. This population was chosen to understand better how they see the domestic violence phenomenon as observer. The collected data met the normality test, so the use of Pearson Product Moment correlation is allowed. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to measure the correlations between variables. It also verifies the significant relationship between variables that meet the normality test (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018). One-way ANOVA was used to measure the relationship between demographic variables. The variables in this study involve husband's violent attitudes against wife, victim-blaming, and demographic variables. The demographic variables include gender, religion and marital status. From three demographic variables, only gender has correlation ($r = .167$; $p < .001$). The religion variable ($r = -.027$; $p = .563$) and marital status ($r = .018$; $p = .708$) do not significantly correlate with perception about domestic violence conducted by husbands and also victim-blaming in domestic violence.

The mean score of victim-blaming on females is 18.34 with a standard deviation of 4.773, and the average victim-blaming score

for male is 20.46, with a standard deviation of 5.041. This means that men have a higher tendency to attribute the mistake to the victim (woman) when presented with a domestic violence case. The victim blaming score between male and female is significantly different ($p < .001$). The mean score of husband's violence against wife (VAW) on female was 39.99 with a standard deviation of 4.852, the mean score on male is 38.13 with a standard deviation of 4.840. This result means that females tend to justify and tolerate domestic violence, conducted by a husband to wife. The male and female score on VAW is significantly different ($p = .002$).

The correlation between two variables, victim-blaming and violence against wife (VAW) is $-.43$. Correlation values between two main variables ($-.43$) indicate the moderate correlation. In addition, the correlation between dimensions in the variable Husband Violence Against Wife was also tested. Correlation between WJ (Wife Beating is Justified) and Husband Violence Against Wife is $.91$.

Table 1.
Correlation

		1	2	3
1	VAWtotal	-		
2	VAW ^d (WJ) ^b	.91**	-	
3	VAW (HG) ^c	.13**	-.30**	-
4	VB ^a	-.43**	-.50**	.20**

^aAttribution error on the victim of domestic violence, ^bWife Beating is Justified, ^cHelp Should Be Given, ^dAct of husband violence to wife, ** significant correlation between variables ($p = .01$)

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the contribution of two or more independent variables on one dependent variable. Stepwise regression is used to develop a subset of independent variables for estimating dependent variables and eliminating independent variables, not providing meaningful information (Tabanick & Fidell, 2007). ANOVA was used to find

the significant difference between the sample groups.

The dependent variable of this study is attribution error to victims and the main independent variable of this study is the husband's violence against his wife. This study also examines the demographic variables, namely, gender, marital status and religion. Stepwise analysis was conducted twice. The first stepwise analysis consists of the dependent variable and three additional demographic variables (gender, marital status, and religion).

From the stepwise regression analysis, a significant result on gender variables was obtained, but not for marital status and religion. Consequently, the marital and religion variables were excluded. The correlation between attribution error with gender is .03 ($r^2 = .03$). This means that only 3% of the VB variable is explained by gender. The 97% of VB is explained by other variables. Another stepwise regression analysis was then conducted by including

gender and VAW. Two models resulting from the analysis suggest that domestic violence against the wife is a better predictor for the victim attribution error variable. The variable of violence against wife (VAW) is a better predictor for the attribution of error to the victim, even though the gender and VAW variables both influence the victim-blaming variable. The r^2 value for the VAW and VB variables is 0.19 and increases to 0.20 when combined with the gender variable. This means that the subject's attitude towards VAW and their gender explain 20% of the victims-blaming variable, while 80% is explained by other variables.

The gender variable and (WJ) have contributed to victim-blaming. The r^2 value for (WJ) and victim blaming variables is 0.19 and increases to 0.20 if gender variable is added. This means that the subject's attitude towards the (WJ) and gender have a 20% contribution to attribution error to the victim (victims blaming), while the other 80% is contributed by other variables.

Tabel 2.

Stepwise Regression Demographic Character and VAW toward VB in domestic violence							
Mode		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	<i>t</i>	R^2	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	Standar Error	β			
1	(Constant)	35.90	1.68		21.35		<.001
	VAW ^a	-.43	.04	-.43	10.30	.19	<.001
2	(Constant)	35.04	1.70		20,54		<.001
	Gender	1.35	.54	.10	2.05	.20	<.01
	VAW	-.41	.04	-.42	-9.81		<.001

Dependent variable = victim-blaming, Variable excluded = marital status, religion

^aDomestic violence, conducted by husbands to wife. Female = 0, Male = 1

This study suggests that marital status and religion do not have a significant correlation to the two main variables; VAW and victim-blaming. It is also found that participants tend to justify domestic violence conducted by a husband to wife and do not attribute the

mistakes to the victims. The interesting finding related to the two main variables is that the attitude of victims blaming (wife blaming) in domestic violence has a significant relationship with the approval of domestic violence.

Furthermore, it was found that the WJ dimension on the IBWB scale had a poor relationship with the victim's blaming attitude. Domestic violence could be perceived differently. There is also an individual who perceives that the victim being blamed doesn't need to get help (Gracia & Tomas, 2014).

This study confirms the contribution of several factors to domestic violence. Results of this research confirms the effect of blame attribution towards beliefs about domestic violence and how the subject as observant's gender could relate to blaming the victims. It was found that victim-blaming is strongly influencing violence against wife (VAW). The attitude toward husband violence to wife influences the attribution in blaming the victim. In reality, people went through a lot of reasoning to justify whether domestic violence was necessary or not. One of those reasons is how this person as an individual sees the gender roles that exist in their society. Gender as a social construct and the perception about domestic violence phenomenon is diverse under different cultures. Consequently, an individual's perspective on domestic violence could be influenced by the culture.

Furthermore, the attitudes supporting domestic violence are based on the belief that one of the genders is the weaker one and would appreciate being commanded, thus causing an attitude of blaming the victim. The findings of this study support the understanding that there are many factors contributing to domestic violence attitudes and victim-blaming.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis of this study, husband's violence attitudes to wife has a correlation with the attribution error to women, as victims. In addition, Attitudes toward violence conducted by a husband to wife relate to attribution error to the victim. The bias of thought and error in perception of

domestic violence leads to domestic violence approval/ tolerance. Blaming victims can reduce or eliminate the sense of responsibility to help and provide a sense of fairness of domestic violence. Several factors contribute to domestic violence and victim-blaming. This study is a groundwork for researching the other factors that also could contribute to domestic violence and victim-blaming, because a broader understanding of this phenomenon is needed.

The result of this study indicates that there is justification for domestic violence behavior in the community. The community should have a good and comprehensive understanding about the attribution of errors in domestic violence cases. Although there is a tendency not to blame the victim, the attitude to tolerate the domestic violence in the community must still be considered to be straightened up. An intervention to develop a better understanding and attitude toward domestic violence could be designed to reduce the justification for domestic violence behavior.

Although this result contributes to several findings about domestic violence in the Indonesian perspective, this research still has limitations. The adequate literature about domestic violence in Indonesia, especially East Java, is extremely limited, as a result, this study has also limited reference. Domestic violence is considered as a personal family problem and therefore the direct access to the case histories of domestic violence are limited just for the authorized party or family, and the complex phenomenon data are difficult to be obtained. However, this study has successfully slightly uncovered the domestic violence phenomenon with a good analysis.

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