



The Dynamics Of Forgiveness In Victims Of Dating Violence

Dinda Sundari

Faculty Of Psychology, University Of North Sumatra, Jl. Dr. Mansur No. 9 Padang Bulan, Kec. Medan Baru, Kota Medan 20222

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Apr 04, 2020
Revised Mei 08, 2020
Accepted Jun 30, 2020

Keywords:

Forgiveness
Dating Violence

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dynamics of forgiveness to the victims of dating violence. Forgiveness is an intraphysical process to release unforgiveness but not the same as conflicts resolution (Worthington and Wade, 1999). The research method using qualitative research with purposive sampling technique with two respondents. The result of this study found that both respondents experienced dissonance with different dynamics before forgiveness. The dissonance that occurred in the first respondent was caused by the fear of being abandoned but did not want to continue being entangled in the sexual abuse condition so as to try to find out the living conditions of people who had experienced sexual abuse and chose forgiveness for their conditions. Dissonance experienced by respondent II when she was angry with transgression I but transgressor I tried to apologize and want to change. But re-enlaved cycle conditions forgiveness back after choosing end with conditions forgiveness on the first dating violence. Respondent I chose decisional forgiveness and respondent II chose emotional forgiveness.

access article under the [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Dinda Sundari,
Faculty Of Psychology,
University Of North Sumatra,
Jl. Dr. Mansur No. 9 Padang Bulan, Kec. Medan Baru, Kota Medan 20222.
Email: dindasundari@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Dating violence itself can be defined as controlling behavior, abusive behavior, and other aggressive behavior that refers to dominance over a partner (Murray, 2007). This dominance often occurs in highly patriarchal cultures. The average violence that occurs in dating relationships 6 months and over (13 times) is higher than 6 months and below (12 times) (Siagian, 2006). The average age of women who are likely to experience violence is 16-24 years. Dating violence also does not look at ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, culture and even economic status (Soroptimist, 2013). For example, the case of dating violence experienced by pop singer Rihanna (21 years) in 2009 was committed by her then boyfriend, Chris Brown (19 years). Reports received that Chris Brown strangled Rihanna moments after Rihanna received text messages from fans. Starting from uncontrollable communication with your partner, uncomfortable emotional regulation (such as excessive anger and jealousy), acting as if you care about your partner, are considered as a way to maintain the relationship, even though these actions restrain the partner. This behavior is considered normal and becomes a habit. In fact, it is a widespread problem that has serious effects in the short and long term (Center for Disease Control, 2011). Rihanna's assault conditions caused her to be

hospitalized. However, some time later the public was surprised because Rihanna again stated that she was back with Brown.

Center for Disease Control (2011) explained, when individuals are not able to forgive, the condition of unforgiveness will continue. The emergence of symptoms of depression and anxiety becomes a form of unforgiveness that affects psychological well-being. Taking revenge or carrying out self-defense mechanisms does not directly have the expected positive impact. But it gives rise to other negative emotions. Another way that can be used to relieve or eliminate unforgiveness is through forgiveness (Worthington & Wade, 1999).

Forgiveness defined as changes in the intrapersonal and prosocial motivation of individuals (McCullough, 1998). This condition can cause changes in the individual. Furthermore, Worthington & Wade (1999) explained that forgiveness causes emotional dissonance in individuals. Emotional dissonance occurs when the victim experiences positive emotions such as empathy, compassion, and humility. This emotion is contrary to the initial emotion (unforgiveness) that is felt so that the victim feels uncomfortable and tries to balance his emotions. This is in accordance with what was experienced by AG which is indicated by the following explanation. "When he apologized, it was Din, I didn't want to meet him. But when he apologized, I was like that. "Is he already evil, I'm sorry." I was angry at that time, but I still love it, we've been together for a long time. But I don't want to meet him, Din." (Personal Communication, 23 May 2017).

Forgiveness management is influenced by personal attribute factors such as personality, emotional intelligence, empathy, guilt or religion and relationship specifics, such as relationship status, relationship satisfaction and commitment. There are factors that are positively correlated and some are negatively correlated so that it affects emotional dissonance in individuals. Individuals can choose to return unforgive or release unforgive based on the individual's own choice (Worthington & Wade, 1999).

Research on the Dynamics of Forgiveness in Young Adults Who Experienced Disconnected Relationships stated that not all subjects in the study experienced forgiveness. However, with forgiveness, the emotional condition of the forgiven subject is more positive so that problems that arise can be resolved more regularly. Therefore, the handling of problems faced after breaking up a relationship becomes more acceptable and understood by individuals. The results of this study are certainly in line with the explanation of Worthington & Wade (1999) which says that forgiveness provides psychological benefits and effective therapy in interventions to free someone from anger and guilt. Other than that, increased self-confidence and low levels of depression are also associated with someone's forgiveness. When individuals fail to forgive, this creates low self-esteem and social introversion which will lead to bad things if experienced continuously in one's life (Helb and Enrigh, in Edmonson, 2004).

Forgiveness it does not guarantee the restoration of relations (reconciliation). Some people may curse and try to vent their anger by retaliating for the actions they have experienced. But this condition does not make a person better. If the individual tries not to vent his anger or suppress his anger, it is better to forgive. After forgiveness, not necessarily individuals can have the same harmonious relationship before the occurrence of dating violence. However, forgiveness provides positive consequences than unforgiveness which is associated with better psychological well-being (Lucia, 2005).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach where the focus of this research is the dynamics of forgiveness in victims of dating violence. The selection of qualitative research methods is expected to obtain more in-depth information. This is because research using qualitative methods can make researchers obtain problems more fully and thoroughly. The researcher uses an intrinsic case study type which helps researchers understand completely without having to generalize the data (Poerwandari, 2007).

The quality of research on forgiveness of victims of dating violence is highly guarded by researchers. Practically, the researcher documented completely and neatly the data collected from the field in accordance with the procedures for the data collection process and analyzed the data carefully.

The researcher also checked and rechecked the data, with an effort to test the possibility of different assumptions. Researchers need to develop tests to check the analysis, test the consistency of the data disclosed by the respondents and to equate the researcher's perception with what the respondent meant. So that unwanted things such as researcher biases can be avoided.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Respondent Identity

Table 1. Identity I

| Information | Respondent |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Name | Wanda (Pseudonym) |
| Age | 23 years |
| Residence | Binjai |
| Work | Student |
| Ethnic/Religion | Karo/Islam |
| Status | Not married yet |
| What order do you come in your family | 1 of 1 sibling(single) |
| Age of Violence | 16 years |
| Type of Violence | Verbal abuse and Sexual abuse |

Table 2. Respondent Identity II

| Information | Respondent |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Name | Vina (Pseudonym) |
| Age | 23 years |
| Residence | Kodam complex |
| Work | Student |
| Ethnic/Religion | Aceh/Islam |
| Status | Not married yet |
| What order do you come in your family | 1 of 1 sibling (single) |
| Age of Violence | 17 years |
| Type of Violence | Physical Abuse |

Results and Discussion of the data are explained using the forgiveness theory of Worthington and Wade (1999). Worthington and Wade (1999) state that forgiveness can be done after an individual experiences unforgiveness. Forgiveness is an individual's intraphysical process of letting go of unforgiveness which is done by the individual's own choice. Forgiveness facilitates emotional dissonance because of the difference in emotion from the initial emotion, so that individuals will try to balance their emotions. Based on data analysis on Wanda (respondent I) and Vina (respondent II), both respondents are able to forgive by releasing unforgiveness and can even re-establish communication with the transgressor. The following is the dynamics of forgiveness for victims of dating violence for each respondent.

3.2 Respondent I (Wanda)

Dating violence Wanda experienced in the form of sexual abuse and verbal abuse. Sexual abuse that happened to Wanda was because Wanda's partner forced her to have sexual activity. At that time, Wanda admitted that she did not understand the limits of sexual activity. However, he reluctantly accepted the treatment. He only felt that his girlfriend's coercion was a bad act. Murray (2007) stated that minimal experience of the possible impacts caused Wanda to continue to be entangled in conditions of sexual abuse. In addition, the lack of sexual education from her parents was acknowledged by Wanda has also contributed to the emergence of acts of dating violence in Wanda's relationship.

Wanda initially believed that her partner would continue to be with her. The gentle nature and affection that had been shown by her partner had been the reason why Wanda at that time accepted her condition. According to Worthington & Wade, an action can be perceived positively or negatively depending on the initial context of a relationship (Worthington & Wade, 1999). In the pattern of dating violence, Wanda's condition can be categorized as being in the tension building phase. From this phase, the dating violence cycle can continue. Wanda's increasing conditions of dating violence, such as insults and insults that get more intense in every debate, are a sign that she has entered the explosion phase in the dating violence cycle. In this phase, the emotions in yourself are increasing (Barnett, 2001).

Negative emotions after experiencing a transgression are also known as unforgiveness conditions. Worthington and Wade (1999) state that the emotional state that includes anger, hatred, and the desire to retaliate for the actions caused by an attack is also called the unforgiveness condition. Wanda's fear, anger and shame increased with time. Wanda persisted against the dating violence she experienced but also harbored fears. Wanda was afraid that if she had to break up with her boyfriend, no one would accept it. Wanda's fears were then shared with her partner. According to Worthington and Wade (1999) Wanda's response is a form of pro-relationship active response. Choice

what Wanda did was don't want the relationship to end. This is because Wanda feels that she has no self-esteem after having sexual activity with her boyfriend. This condition makes his girlfriend increasingly feel he has high authority and dominates him. To protect herself from the helplessness she experienced, Wanda then chose to stay with her boyfriend. Karen Horney (in Sultz, 2005) suggests that a person's condition in dealing with powerlessness can be passed in three ways, moving forward (getting closer), againsts people (against other people) or moving away (away). In Wanda's condition, she chooses to move forward with her partner in order to avoid the helplessness she is experiencing. He chose to stay with his partner.

Her fear and choice to stay put turned Wanda into dissonance. The fear of pregnancy due to continuing sexual activity and the fear of being left behind if she does not follow her partner's will to engage in sexual activity made Wanda think of a resolution to the situation. Wanda's business is to seek information about the future of people who have experienced sexual activity. The experiences of other people who, according to Wanda, are worse than her own, inspire courage in Wanda. Wanda finally decided to break up with her partner. The choice to break up with her partner after experiencing emotional dissonance is Wanda's resolution. Conditions after dissonance can cause a person to return to unforgive or become forgiveness. Based on Wanda's choice.

After doing forgiveness, Wanda felt that she had a better life. He becomes more sensitive to his surroundings. Wanda admitted that when her next partner started asking her to have sexual activity, she became more assertive. The freedom to make friends and make friends with other people can also be felt after breaking up with their partner. In addition, Wanda felt grateful that the sexual act she had left did not have a visible negative impact. Wanda's condition is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Ferlita (2008) which found that someone who has experienced dating violence will have an assertive nature.

3.3 Respondent II (Vina)

Respondent II (Vina) experienced verbal and emotional abuse as well as physical abuse. Not only once, after experiencing it with Rezaldy (transgressor I), Vina also experienced it with Reza (transgressor II). In perceiving the emotional abuse condition experienced, Vina considered that the prohibition action taken by Rezaldy (transgressor I) was a natural thing. This is because Vina's parents at home also always prohibit and limit Vina's friendship. In addition to getting emotional abuse, Vina also experienced verbal and physical abuse. Not only once, after breaking up with transgressor I, Vina also received the same violence from transgressor II. Unlike Wanda (respondent I), Vina's violence from transgressor I did not make her self-assertive. Vina was unable to escape from Transgressor II.

Regarding the verbal abuse that Vina experienced from transgressors I and transgressors II, she initially thought it was normal. Invectives and harsh words in the form of "hogs and pigs" according to Vina are common. This is because Vina also often hears and communicates with these words. However, when the word "Bitch" was associated with him, feelings of anger and

disappointment rose within Vina. Vina's anger and disappointment can be known as unforgiveness (Worthington & Wade, 1999). Responding to this, Vina chose to remain silent and dodge. Silence and avoidance are forms of passive response (rumination) and active response (avoidance) in the dynamics of forgiveness (Worthington & Wade, 1999).

Vina's pain as a result of physical abuse did not respond well to Vina. Her shock every time she experiences physical abuse can only be accepted by trying to understand her partner's temperament. Vina positions herself as a transgressor who will get angry when her partner communicates too much with the opposite sex. Through empathy for the transgressor, Vina can tolerate the actions of the transgressor. According to Worthington and Wade (1999), empathy is one of the factors for someone to forgive. This tolerance causes dating violence to come back again and again.

Murray (2007) states that experience in dating conditions can assess subsequent dating conditions. Based on the conditions experienced by Vina, she did not take her experience as something that could be used as a lesson, so that the dating violence condition repeated itself. When the condition of dating violence is repeated, the level of violence that occurs increases. This is in line with the dating violence cycle which explains that the more dating violence increases, the more phases it goes through (Brown in Chung, 2007). As the violence experienced increased, over time the negative emotions experienced also increased.

Minimizing the negative emotions experienced by Vina, the response she showed to transgressor I and transgressor II looked the same. The unforgiveness condition that Vina went through was eliminated by moving away from the transgressor (avoidance). As Vina moves away, transgressors I and II try to contact her. Based on the dynamics of forgiveness, Worthington & Wade (1999), stated that Vina's condition was in the transgressor response stage which could lead a person to dissonance.

Vina's dissonance was caused by the two transgressors trying to apologize in a sweet way. Vina who was already angry became worried about her choice. In this condition, Vina thought that she was afraid that her partner would continue to do physical abuse if she accepted an apology from the transgressor. Based on Worthington's forgiveness dynamics, someone who experiences dissonance can again forgive or remain in an unforgiveness condition (Worthington & Wade, 1999). The final resolution that Vina chose was to break up with both transgressors and do forgiveness. Similar to respondent I, although her relationship was embellished with acts of dating violence, Vina felt that the sweet nature of her former partner was able to make her happy. Satisfaction with the relationship that has happened is the reason Vina is able to forgive. According to Worthington and Wade (1999), relationship satisfaction is one of the factors in doing forgiveness.

The decision to end the relationship with transgressor I and transgressor II gave benefits to Vina's life. Vina felt happier after she ended the relationship with the two transgressors. Being able to escape dating violence has made Vina feel more free in life. His physique, which had experienced pain, and his heart, which had experienced negative emotions, became better after doing forgiveness. Worthington & Wade (1999) stated that the forgiveness experienced by a person can be related to the health and well-being of the individual himself. In addition, the anger that has accumulated in the individual will be released so that it can change destructive thinking in a better direction (Enright, 2001). Thus, Vina was able to re-communicate with the transgressor.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis obtained from the two respondents, it can be concluded that the two research respondents who experienced dating violence are currently capable of forgiveness. The dissonance that occurred in respondent I was caused by the fear of being abandoned because they had experienced sexual abuse. The desire to be free from sexual abuse conditions makes Wanda find out about the living conditions of people who have experienced sexual abuse. As if getting strength, Wanda is able to break up and choose forgiveness. The dissonance experienced by respondent II when anger and irritation accumulated in him but transgressor I tried to apologize in a sweet way. In the end, respondent II decided for forgiveness after convincing his heart that the transgressor would not change. Unfortunately, however, Regarding the emotional abuse experienced, the two respondents gave different perceptions. Respondent I felt that the act of

emotional abuse from the transgressor was very disturbing. Even so, he chose to remain silent in dating condition. Different from respondent I, respondent II did not consider the emotional abuse she had received from the two transgressors negative. Positive perceptions that arise from respondent II because parents (especially fathers) always prohibit and place restrictions on them. This is the reason for respondent II that the limits given are a form of affection.

Verbal abuse experienced by the two respondents also responded differently. Even though both of them considered it negative when the word 'Bitch' was associated with them, however, respondent II considered other swear words he received as normal. This condition is because respondent II is used to using swear words in daily communication. When respondent II received verbal abuse twice during courtship, this condition was still perceived as a positive thing. Even though respondent II had experienced dating violence in his previous courtship, this condition did not make him assertive about his future relationship. Respondent II was again entangled and received verbal and physical abuse from the next partner.

Respondent I who received sexual abuse initially admitted that they were afraid but for no reason. This happened because respondent I did not understand the conditions of sexual abuse received. Over time, the fear increased. The fear that no other man would accept her after engaging in sexual activity, forced her to endure dating violence. Respondent I felt a loss of self-esteem. To overcome this, respondent I then found out about the lives of people who had experienced sexual activity.

Knowing that people who have experienced sexual activity also still have a future, makes the self-esteem of respondent I reappear. This is what triggers respondent I to get out of the dating violence condition and choose forgiveness as a resolution of the dissonance that occurs.

Respondent II who experienced physical abuse from transgressor I did not necessarily make him able to avoid transgressor II. By positioning themselves as transgressors, respondent II tries to understand the two transgressors. Because of this condition, he was then entangled in dating violence. Ko, the physical and psychological conditions that were allowed to be entangled in the dating violence condition over time made him tired. The feelings of disappointment and anger that accumulated because they also received verbal abuse eventually became the reason for breaking up with the two transgressors. The reason that the relationship he has lived has also made him happy also makes respondent II able to do forgiveness. The belief that humans can make mistakes is the reason respondent II is able to communicate with the two transgressors again. It's just that their love relationship is not united anymore. The choice to break up from both transgressors brought happiness to respondent II. He feels free and free from the physical and psychological pain that he has kept.

REFERENCES

- Admin. (2016). Kekerasan dalam Pacaran Fenomena Sunyi di Indonesia. <http://bp3akb.jabarprov.go.id/kekerasan-dalam-pacaran-fenomena-sunyi-di-indonesia/>. Diakses 12 Maret 2017.
- Annisa, Rifka. (2013). Data Laporan Kekerasan <http://www.rifka-annisa.org/id/penelitian-publikasi/buku> Diakses Oktober 2016.
- Barnett, Patricia. (2001). The Walker „Cycle of Violence' and Its Applicaability to Wife Battering in the South African Context. Disertasi Master. University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg
- Bono, Giacomo. Dkk. (2007). Forgiveness, Feeling Connected to Others, and Well-Being: Two Longitudinal Studies. *Journal Society for Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. XX. No. X.
- Center for Disease Control.(2011). Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_datin_g_violence.html Diakses pada 14 November 2016.
- Chung, D. (2007). Making meaning of relationships: young women"s experiences and understandings of dating violence. *Journal of Violence Againts Women*, 13. 1274-1295.

- Clairbone, Liz. (2005). Tech Abuse in Relationship study. Teen Research: Clairbone Inc.
- DeGenova.(2008). Intimate Relationship, Marriage and Families. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Edmonson,K.A.(2004). Forgiveness and rumination: Their relationship and effects psychological and physical health. Disertasi Doctoral. University of Tennessee. Knoxville. USA.
- Enright, R.D.(2001). Forgiveness is a choice; A step by step process for resolving and restoring hope. Washington DC: American Psychology Association.
- Ferlita, Gracia.(2008). Sikap Terhadap Kekerasan Dalam Berpacaran (Penelitian Pada Mahasiswi Reguler Universitas Esa Unggul Yang Memiliki Pacar). Jurnal Psikologi 06(01), 10-24.
- Hogg, Michael.(2002). Social Psychology. London: Prentice Hall
- Hyde, J.S. (2007). Half th human experience: The psychology of wman. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Kelly, D. (2006). Violence in Dating Relationship (Public Health Agency of Canada. 0-662). Canada: Minister of Health.
- Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan.(2014). Lembar Fakta Catatan Tahunan (CATAHU) Komnas Perempuan http://www.komnasperempuan.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/KOMNAS-PEREMPUAN_-CATATAN-TAHUNAN-2016edisi-Launching-7-Maret-2016.pdf Diakses Oktober 2016
- Krahe, Barbara. (2001). The Psychology of Agression.USA: Psychology Press Ltd Lucia, Lyn Santa. (2005). The Power of Forgiveness. Scholatic Choices: Research Library.
- Lyon, Elishabeth Sarah.(2015). Dating Violence and the Stay/Leave Decisions of Young Women in College. Disertasi Doctoral. Kansas State University. Manhattan.
- McCullough, M. E., Worthington, E.L., & Rachal, K.C.(1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73, 321-336.
- McCullough, M.E.,dkk.(1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships:II Theoretical Elaboration and Measurement. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 75. 1586-1603.
- McCullough, Michael E. (2000). Forgiveness as Human Strength: Theory, Measurement, and Links to Well-Being. Journal of social and clinical psychology, vol. 19. no. 1. 2000. pp. 43-55.
- McCullough, M.E, Fincham, F.D and Tsang, J. (2003). Forgiveness, forbearance and time : the temporal unfolding of transgression-related interpersonal motivations. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84 (3), 540557.
- Moeloeng, L.J.(2000). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif. Bandung: Rosda Karya.
- Murray, J. (2007). Abusive Dating Relationships. United State: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Poerwandari, E Kristi.(2007). Pendekatan Kualitatif untuk Perilaku Manusia. Jakarta: LPSP3 UI.
- Poerwandari, E Kristi.(2008). Penguatan Psikologis untuk Menanggulangi Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga dan Kekerasan Seksual.Jakarta: Program Kajian Wanita Universitas Indonesia.
- Santrock, John W.(2007). Remaja Edisi 11 Jilid I. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Siagian, Olivia.(2006).Gambaran Kekerasan dalam Pacaran di Kota Medan.
- Skripsi. Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- Schultz, D.P., & Schultz, S.E. (2005). Theories of Personality 8th edition. USA: Wadsworth.

- Spring dan Spring. (2006) *After the affair*. Jakarta: Trans Media.
- Soroptimist. (2013). *Learn About Teen Dating Violence, Its Risk-Factors And Consequences, As well As Preventative Efforts*. Philadelphia: Soroptimist Int.
- Suleman, Munandar & Homzah, Siti. (2010). *Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan Tinjauan dalam Berbagai Disiplin Ilmu & Kasus Kekerasan (Eds)*. Bandung: PT Refika Aditama.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime. *Bulletins for Teens: Dating Violence*. <https://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/get-help-bulletins-for-crime-victims/bulletins-for-teens/dating-violence#what>. Diakses pada 21 Desember 2016.
- Tribun. *Angka Kekerasan dalam Pacaran Tinggi, tetapi UU masih Belum Melindungi*. 8 Maret 2016 <http://medan.tribunnews.com/2016/03/08/angka-kekerasan-dalam-pacaran-tinggi-tetapi-uu-belum-melindungi>. Diakses pada 6 April 2017.
- WHO. (2010). *The World Health Report*. http://www.who.int/whr/2010/10_summary_en.pdf Diakses 17 Mei 2017.
- Worthington, Everett. L & Wade, Nathaniel. G. (1999). *The Psychology of Unforgiveness and Forgiveness and Implications for Clinical Practice*. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 18, 385-419.
- Worthington, dkk. (2007). *Forgiveness, Health, and Well-Being: A Review of Evidence for Emotional Versus Decisional Forgiveness, Dispositional Forgiveness, and Reduced Unforgiveness*. *Journal Behav Med*, 30: 291- 302.
- Zechmeister, J.S., Gracia, S., Romero, C., & Vas, s.N. (2004). *Don't apologize unless you mean it: a laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation*. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*. Vol. 23, 4: 532-564.