



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUAL ABUSED
IN TAWAU**

Nur Athirah Affendi

**Bachelor of Science with Honours
(Cognitive Science)
2018**

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IN TAWAU**

NUR ATHIRAH AFFENDI

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
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Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
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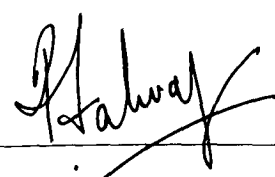
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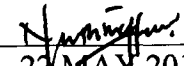
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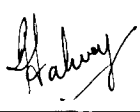
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ABSTRACT

Children sexual abuse has become phenomenon in all over the world. For this, the researcher is focusing on the phenomenon of sexual abuse among children that has been sexually abused as the main point for this research. Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a sexual activity that involved a children and the perpetrators which the victims do not understand the act of the sexual activity. This sexual activity is done by someone who has sexual desires toward children. Generally, this research was described the phenomenon among the children who have been sexually abused and focusing on socio-demographic profile of the victims, to describe the life experiences of the abused victims, to investigate the effects of sexual abuse on the abused victims and to study the parents of the victims. This research was be conducted by using a qualitative design which four informants will interviewed in this research study. These four informant were selected using the snowball sampling and all the data that obtained from the interview will be analyzed using the content analysis. The findings shows that the perpetrator was among their relative and someone close to the children. Children who have experienced child sexual abused and their parents are both being psychologically affected. This research recommends for the future researches to expand the scope of the research, to study the adult who have experienced sexual abuse during childhood.

Keywords: Child, perpetrators, sexual abused

ABSTRAK

Penderaan seksual kanak-kanak telah menjadi salah satu fenomena di seluruh dunia. Oleh itu, penyelidik telah memberi tumpuan kepada fenomena penderaan seksual di kalangan kanak-kanak merupakan titik utama dalam penyelidikan ini. Penderaan seksual kanak-kanak adalah aktiviti seksual yang melibatkan kanak-kanak dan pelaku yang tidak memahami tindakan seksual mangsa. Aktiviti seksual ini dilakukan oleh seseorang yang mempunyai keinginan seksual terhadap kanak-kanak. Secara amnya, penyelidikan ini akan menghuraikan fenomena di kalangan kanak-kanak yang telah didera secara seksual dan memberi tumpuan kepada profil sosio-demografi mangsa, menerangkan pengalaman hidup mangsa yang disalahgunakan, menyiasat kesan-kesan penderaan seksual terhadap mangsa-mangsa yang didera dan melihat reaksi ibu bapa mangsa terhadap isu ini. Kajian ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif yang mana empat orang informan bakal ditemubual dalam kajian ini. Empat informan ini dipilih menggunakan pensampelan bola salji dan semua data yang diperolehi dari temubual ini akan dianalisis menggunakan analisis kandungan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelaku adalah antara saudara mereka dan seseorang yang rapat dengan kanak-kanak. Kanak-kanak dan ibu bapa mereka keduanya akan terjejas secara psikologi. Kajian ini mencadangkan penyelidikan masa depan untuk memperluaskan skop penyelidikan, untuk mengkaji orang dewasa yang telah mengalami penderaan seksual semasa zaman kanak-kanak.

Kata kunci: Kanak-kanak, pelaku, penderaan seksual

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

“I was scared. I was even more scared because the person who was doing the kissing and fondling was my father “

-Rachel, 12 (Stop it Now, 2017)

Every child on earth should be loved. Children need love and affection because it will help them feel safe. Therefore, they have the right to grow up in a conducive surrounding and healthy. Adults need to support, protect them from any harm, painful act so that they will have a greater self-esteem. However, sexual abuse of children has become phenomenon that accurse culture and socio-economic group and it happens all over the world. Child sexuality has always been and still a problem for both parents and professional worldwide. Even though, government has taken many step to prevent this child sexual abuse, this case kept increasing. Hence, this case should be taken seriously and provide the way for protecting the victims and prevent this from happening.

The statistics of child sexual abuse that has been reported increase every year and this case was something in the state of alarming state that is not something we should take lightly. This child sexual abuse has become long term negative consequences cruel, tragic occurrence and serious infringement of a child right to health and protection. Children experience sexual abuse in every familiar place such as in homes, schools, community they live in, orphanages, in place of detention and on the streets. Children who experienced sexual abuse might perceive the world as an unsafe place where the adults can be manipulative and untrustworthy people who take advantages toward children (Gateway, 2013). There are some sign of sexual abuse when child (Gateway, 2013).

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change or to participate in any physical activities
- Having a nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away from home
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment

When children show this kind of signs, they need to receive a proper treatment or therapy to ensure that they are having a stable emotions. The negative effects on child will occur if child sexual abuse is not prevented. According to Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013), there are some factor that might affects the effect of abuse or trauma which are:

- The relationship between the abuser and the child
- How long the abuse has taken places
- The form of sexual abuse done by the abuser
- The age of the child (younger children are weaker and tend to be more traumatic)
- The grooming techniques used by the abuser to gain the children trust on them

The incidents of child sexual abuse are increasing at an alarming rate. Even though the fact that the child sexual abuse are critical and prevalent, they have been under reported. Most of the children that have been sexually abused are unable to tell anyone even to their family members. Based on the result by Wager (2015), 75% of the children who have been sexually abused are

unable to disclose this issue toward anyone when they are still children. This is because they are ashamed, embarrassed regarding this issue as the private matter, not thinking that this issues is a crime or they do not think it is serious to report to police, not wanting anyone to know about the issues, self-blame or fearing blame by others for the attack and the victims want to protect the perpetrator.

According to Wager (2015), another reasons for them not to disclose this issue to anyone are because the situation are normal to them, lack of opportunity, feeling ashamed, care for other and feeling hopelessness. But some of the victims regret for not disclosing it earlier and some of them had tried to disclose (Wager, 2015). Some of the countries such as India and Malaysia are very sensitive towards this issue because reporting such cases could be considering embracing and sources of crisis (Nigussie, 2014). They do not want anyone to know about this issue and wanted to keep this problem among the family only because of the family's dignity. They assume if the disclose or report this case it will bring shameful situation for the family. This kind of cases is known as a taboo in the society.

1.1 Background of the Study

The sexual abuse of children has been referred to as “one of the defining cultural themes of our age” (Fergusson & Mullen, 1999), a phenomenon that ultimately” emerged from the cloak of social secrecy and has become a leading concern of mental health professionals” (Cole & Putnam, 1992). It is actually difficult to define the meaning of child sexual abuse with precision as there can be no universal meaning based on a broadly acceptable value (Paul, 1991). This mistreat has a lot of definition and terms that has been used because forming an abuse may not be abuse of one community, but it may be considered as a form of abuse in another society (Afridah,

2012). Ever since the sexual mistreatment of children has been widespread problem, professional having difficulty with how to conceptualize and define child sexual abuse (Haugaard, 2000).

Sexual abuse includes activities by a parent or caregiver such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials towards the children (Gateway, 2013). According to World Health Organization (2003) define child abuse as all forms of abuse whether physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, abuse, maltreatment or exploitation which may cause injury or damage to the healthy, life, development or dignity of the child done by those who have the responsibilities, trust or authority over the child. Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of children in sexual activities that they do not fully understand what the perpetrator has been doing or the impact of the consent, or the act that is something contrary to role of the family. These characteristics are captured by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which has defined child sexual abuse as "the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for purpose of producing a visual depiction or the rape and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution or other form of sexual exploitation of children or incest with children" (Neglect, 2003).

In this research, the researcher will be focusing more on children who have been sexually abused by the incest as the main point on this research. Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) generally is a sexual activity that involves the children who do not understanding the act. This activity that fulfills the desire toward the children. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a victim generally under sixteen years of age and an adult which this activity that satisfy the need of the other person (Nigussie, 2014). Nowadays, a person who commits the sexual abuse on children is

called as the paedophilia. The term "paedophilia" unfortunately has two grossly misleading connotations (Glaser, 1990). According to Glaser (1990), the sole aim of the paedophile is to sexually abuse children and any display of care, affection or friendship towards the victim is always secondary to this.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) violence comes in different forms such as rape, genital touching, molestation, fondling, sexual harassment, abduction, early marriage, female genital cutting, verbal abuse, and committing children to abusive and sexually exploitative activities (The Africa Child Policy Forum & Save the Children Sweden, 2006). There are few types of abuse such as non-contact abuse which is the abuser forces the victim to watch pornography or watch the abuser masturbate. Touching the victim private parts which is the abuser touches any private part of the children with their mouths or hands or force the victims to touch the abuser's private parts are one of the few types of abuse. Another types are attempted vaginal and anal penetrative acts where the abuser put any object such as their finger or penis into vagina or anus. Besides, vaginal and anal penetrative acts which the abuser try to put object, finger or penis into vagina or anus of the child.

The Child Act in 2001 (Act 611) has consolidate three major statutes governing children and young persons which is the Juvenile Court Act 1947, Child Protection Act and Women and Girls Protection Act 1973 state that a person whose age below 18 years old is defined as a child. The Child Act 2001 has brought a big major changes in the law of protecting the child in Malaysia where the right of the child has been recognized openly by the government (Afridah Abbas, 2012). Child have the right to get any care and protection if they being sexual abused. According to world statistics and study that conducted by the Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia shows that child abuse , rapes cases, molestation are increasing year by year (Azliza & Jaafar, 2013). Child sexual

abuse in Malaysia has been rising over the past five years. In the first seven months of 2009, 2913 cases are reported to Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) while in 2007 and 2008 a total of 4278 child abuse has been recorded.

This serious problem required a lot of effective prevention strategies since it will bring the negative impact to the children during their childhood and future adulthood in physical, emotional and psychological contexts. Therefore a lot of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and social activists are starting to make many campaign and forum about the violence and child sexual abuse such as Shelter Home, Malaysian Child Welfare, Voice of Children, and Save the Children (OSC). They are spreading about the awareness of this issues especially to the parents so that they will take care more with this kind of issues. The Child Act also have provided provisions to protect children who have been sexually abused that needs extra care and protection. The protection that is provided is such restriction on media reporting and publication, duty of the police officer taking a child into a temporary custody and putting them in a safe house or room, and also duty to inform on abuse case to the relevant authority.

The person who commits this crime is not only a stranger but he can be among the family members such as father, mother, and brother or relatives. This is called as incest when the person who commits sexual abuse is among the family members. The saddest part is, most of the children who become victims have been sexually abused by someone they know and trust (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2009). This proves that children must be aware of the stranger but someone who is close to them. The abuser will use a “grooming” techniques to get close with the children such as giving present, bringing them to the place he want to go, and giving extra attention to them. Some of the abusers will use intimidation techniques to threat the children and ensure that children will keep quiet and do not tell others about them to anyone (Enola, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

Child sexual abuse is a major problem all over the world. The incidence of child sexual abuse are increasing at an alarming state. This issues is common in almost all countries at the global level. Prevention of child abuse is still an uncharted field in Asia. Mostly, the approaches for prevention and methods of treatment of child abuse do not cover all the entire of sexual abuse. This is because the lack of reliable data on the incidents off child sexual abuse as many cases has not reported and knowledge of methods of prevention and treatment has been recognizes and are being addressed by sovereign governments, national and international such as UNICEFF, Save the children, and Plan International (Kacker, Varadan, Kumar, Mohsin, & Dixit, 2007). The awareness and recognition of this issues is at an infant stage (Nigussie, 2014).

Even though government and some of the NGOs have been taken many ways to prevent the child sexual abuse by creating awareness but it is still insufficient (Afridah Abbas, 2012). Child sexual abuse is increasing at an alarming rate and there are many cases regarding child sexual abuse are being reported to justice but still many have not reported about this child sexual abuse due to many factors. Reporting such cases could be considering embarrassing and source of crisis (Nigussie, 2014). The factor of not reporting this issues is related to dignity and pride of their family and when the abuser is among the family member. Many cases of child abuse go unreported due to apathy by parents and society in general, leaving the victims suffering in silence. Parents of the victims worried what people perception about their family if their reported this issues.

Based on the statistic from the Department of Social Welfare shows that this issues are increasing year by year. Child sexual abuse in Malaysia has been rising over the past five years, with 5,052 cases reported of child abuse during that period (Kumar, 2017). In the 2011 the total of child abused reported is 3,428 cases and this number increasing to 3,831 cases in 2012. In 2013,

number of child abuse keep increasing to 4,119 following 4,295 in 2014 and 4,453 in 2015. This number keep increasing year by year. In 2017, there are 5,052 cases of sexual abuse have been reported and most of the offenders are parents, guardians and those close to the children, which includes paedophile (Kumar, 2017). These number are alarming us that child sexual abuse is at the critical state.

Many laws such in Malaysia such as Child Act 2001 and Domestic Violence's Act 1994 are the main legislations which govern the case of child abuse (Afridah Abbas, 2012). This laws have been passed with the objective to protect the welfare of the children and tries to prevent this crime from being committed. Laws focusing more on the provision relating to the welfare of the child who has been abused and their rights to prove they are innocents and also restrain the abuser from committing this crime. However, laws alone cannot solve this problem in our society. It should be taken seriously and provide more way to protect the victims and prevent this crime from happening (Afridah Abbas, 2012). A lot of methods need to be used in order to let the public be aware of this crime.

An active social activists named as Syed Azmi has dropped a bombshell by claiming that a local paedophile group is active in a well-known social media network (Moh, 2016). Syed Azmi revealed that the group which was active on the Telegram messaging app has made lewd and crude remarks a picture of a young girl who was wearing in a swimsuit. He received a screenshot picture of that young girl on Telegram chat group and revealed this piece information through his Facebook status on Thursday, 2 June (Balakarishnan, 2016). Most citizens who read his post felt angry and worried toward those stories. They felt angry to those member who have been doing this crime and some of them are felt surprised because the perpetrator are among the close family

members. Syed Azmi reminded the parents to be more careful and give full attention to their child as this issue has become worst in our society.

Most of the parent in Malaysia still have very narrow-minded thinking. They do not want to disclose this issue because they think this is a very private issue and children also unable to disclose this issue to anyone. Before reporting this issue they want to discuss secretly among their family members. Reporting this issue could be one of the embarrassing and source of crisis. This shows that many more cases which have gone unreported due to embarrassment and shame or simply because of indifferences and apathy. In this modern society, everyone minds their own business and does not care about issues that happen outside the public. This is the issue that parents must take seriously. The parents might worry about people's perception towards their family if they report these cases. It is supposed that they receive the moral support and not being blamed and humiliated for the crime that happened to their child (Enola, 2012). They think a lot of people will be affected if they reported these cases.

The children must be educated on how to prevent cases of sexual abuse as they are helpless and unable to defend themselves. They need to be educated in a simple way and adults should explain in more details about this issue. Children should know that touching their private parts with hand or things and people cannot undress them to take a picture even though they are their family members or relatives. This is to ensure that children know the basic knowledge about sexual behavior. This is also to prevent children from being afraid to disclose this issue towards anyone and adults can take action as sometimes children do not realize that they have been abused when they are still children until they grow up.

Some of the children are unable to tell anyone this issue when they are still children as the perpetrators are among the family members or relatives and someone that have a close relationship to them. In the majority of cases, some of the children also do not disclose abuse immediately following the event. This is because of the reluctance to disclose abuse tends to stem from a fear of the perpetrators (Organization, 2013). Therefore, they do not want public to know about this case and just keep this secret between them and the perpetrators. They will feel guilty and keep blaming themselves if this case has been reported and the abuser will go to the jail. Some of them also are afraid that what people perception toward the when they disclose this issues. Due to the stigma and difficulties in finding the respondent not many studies have been conducted in this area. There are few known studies done in Tawau, hence this study will study more about the children who have been sexually abused.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this research is to describe the phenomenon of sexual abuse among children in Tawau that have been sexually abused by incest.

1.3.1 Specific Objective

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of the abuse victims.
2. To describe the life-experiences of the abused victims.
3. To study the parents of the abused victims.
4. To suggest remedial measure to prevent sexual abused

1.3.2 Research Question

1. How have the victims reacted to the situation?
2. How old the child when she/he has been abused?
3. Where did the incident happened?
4. Was the abuser a close relatives of victims?
5. Did the victims sustain physical injury during abused?
6. How have they adjusted after being abused (PSTD)?
7. What is the action by the parents when they know their child has been sexually abused?
8. What the treatment received by the abused?
9. Have the abuser received any punished by law?
10. What effects the victim's shows after being abused?

1.4 Significance of Study

This study is to spread awareness of child sexual abuse to the public so that child or family of the victims can be fully aware of this issue. The researcher wants the public to prevent the child sexual abuse by creating public awareness through mass media such as forum and campaigns or education programs. This is to give full support to the victims and do not treat the victims as they are the one who commit the crime. The children need extra attention and support from the public so that they can move on from this bad experience and face the public. The researcher wants to ensure that victims can defend their own right and bring the abuser to the court.