

The Meaning of Forgiveness in Transgender and Its Implications in Guidance and Counseling

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Article Info

History Articles
Received:
9 September 2022
Accepted:
20 October 2022
Published:
30 December 2022

Keywords:
forgiveness,
transgender,
community counseling

Abstract

Forgiveness is a positive attitude that helps transgender people to live their lives as a minority in a common society. Thus, this study was focused on determining the meaning of transgender people forgiveness and its implication for guidance and counseling. The study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenology design and obtained data from *komunitas pewaris* (transgender people community in Semarang City) represented by three people. Once the data were collected, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was carried out. Findings indicated that the forgiveness in transgender people was caused by a series of events, such as regret, self-mediation, and emotional control. Moreover, individuals' perception was found significant in transgender people forgiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

As time advances, the counseling profession will face more challenges in which it not only covers formal settings, but also wider part of life. This profession becomes more demanded in many aspects outside school settings, such as non-formal education and human resources development Prayitno (in Daryanti, et al., 2020).

In facing the society risky changes, people can choose to be pessimistic or optimistic (Wibowo, 2018). Similarly, guidance and counseling holds an important role in helping transgender people to live their lives for the present and future.

Transgender is a term used for individuals who behave significantly different their true gender. Transgender identifies himself as not matched with either male or female gender (Lestari, Indah & Sefitri, 2016). Transgender itself is a sexual deviation behavior by being homosexual or heterosexual (Lestari, 2018). In people's lives, transgender behavior cannot be separated from the existence of a strong process and encouragement from within the individual that he or she lives in a wrong body or opposite willingness with the psychological condition. Surely, this causes psychological conflict in Jasrudin & Daud (in Johana et al., 2017).

A study by (Siti, et al., 2016) mentions transgender becomes a minority group in a society, especially in worship, resulting violation and discrimination from others and ostracized.

By forgiving, transgender can have a life purpose and establish a good relationship. In addition, forgiveness can free them from negative perceptions and reduce desire to hurt others who have done something wrong to them.

Forgiveness is a positive attitude that helps transgender people live their lives as a minority the middle of a society. It is in line with what was found by (Adams, 2017) that forgiveness is not a one-time event, but is a lifelong process and occurs unexpectedly. In addition, (Adam, karduz, Firdevs, & Sar, 2019)

in their study also revealed that the tendency to forgive is influenced by five personality factors, including openness, experience, awareness, extraversion, and friendliness. Disclosure to experience increases as the attitude to forgive increases. This may occur because someone realizes that individuals have the character to be sociable, open, and intellectual.

It is generally known that discrimination against transgender is inhumane (Abidin, 2019). A study by (Lenggogeni & Friman, 2021) states lack of public understanding about transgender people makes them feel foreign and inclusive. It may lead them to withdraw from society. Lev states that transgender people are mostly ignored and become a minority which are risky to depression, suicide, and hatred (Dresner, et al., 2013).

Being treated unfavorably by the society makes transgender people get hurt and somehow be possessed by hatred and revenge. There is only one way to deal with this feeling, namely forgiveness McCulloch et al., (in Lestari & Agung, 2016).

The above phenomena are felt by transgender people in Semarang. They have got anger, hate, and revenge due to discrimination done by the society. What is more, family ignorance makes them get more hurt.

Based on the findings and limitations of the previous studies, the present study was focused on the context of forgiveness by transgender. It was inspired by the results of the previous studies that conclude forgiveness contributes positive effects on emotional and anger management.

This study chose transgender people forgiveness because this aspect truly matters to deal with the pain they experience due to the society exclusion which makes them become a minority. Here, the self-understanding done by forgiveness can make the transgender people live their lives firmer according to their life choice.

The previously mentioned phenomenon was considered good to get a deeper investigation. Thus, this study aimed to comprehend the meaning of forgiveness by transgender people and its implication for

guidance and counseling. It may not be widely known that guidance and counseling has something to do with a transgender community by assisting the people to understand identity, mentoring, and helping transgender people to be able to socialize with the majority community.

METHODS

The subjects involved in this study were transgender people who met several criteria, such as having an experience in establishing komunitas persatuan waria Semarang (Perwaris) or Semarang transgender community, being violated by security forces, domestic violence, and aged between 30-40 years.

In terms of method, this study used a qualitative approach with phenomenology design. Its data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This analysis method was considered suitable because it aims at discovering the way individuals interpret their meaningful experiences in lives in a natural setting.

Prior to the analysis, the data were collected using interviews, observation, and documentation. The interview was done to three main subjects and in form of semi-structured in which the questions were limited by a plot. The questions were open-ended. After the questions were given, the respondents answers were recorded and transcribed afterwards.

Observation on transgender people daily life was carried out to support the results of the interviews. Here, the researchers took part as an observer who participated in activities done by the subjects directly.

To validate the data, the researchers used source and method triangulations. Meanwhile, the reliability was checked using the triangulation of method, interview results, observation, and documentation.

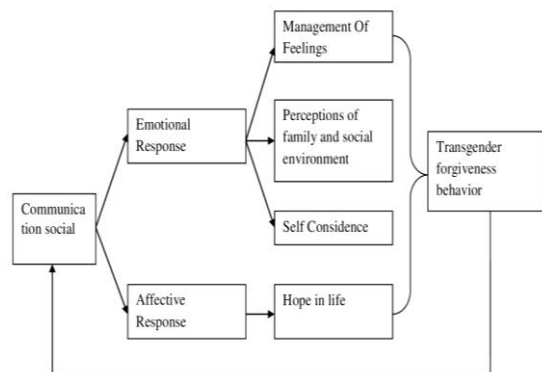
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was performed by the researchers to analyze the data. Prior to it, data reduction was done through transcription, determining explorative comments, determining themes, and

deciding superordinate data to be the primary ones.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in Semarang City with various different meeting points based on the needs and involved three transgender people.

Gambar 1. The theme of forgiveness in Transgender



Findings indicated that forgiveness was established based on tolerance of conflicts, an effort to reduce the feeling of hurt, the feeling of open-minded attitude, and good emotional management. Robert D. Enright (in Khasan, 2017) states that forgiveness done sincerely can reduce anger and negative views on others. It is done by the subject to avoid long-term bad impact.

If I'm the type who isn't frontal, when I hear what's being said, I respond immediately to clashes or bickering. Shut up, I'll study again whether what he said is true or not, what should be done to finish the conversation, I don't need to respond, just let it be. (SL 204-207).

The forgiveness done by transgender people in Semarang was in line with several previous themes. It was formed from a series of the subject's life experiences. Conditions happened in one's environment, workplace, society, and family shaped various responses to the emerged themes. The subjects' responses were mostly dominated by cognitive, affective, and connotative ones.

Cognitive response according to (Yarhouse, 2015) explains gender dysphoria or a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

Like, if there's ridicule or what it is, it's back again. To ourselves like this, if we fight head-on like that, it'll affect us too. (RA 177-178).

Emotional response was expressed by the transgender people through the feelings of anger, sadness, guilty, and regret. Those feelings arouse due to their decision in changing gender identity, causing them being mocked by others. This also raised the subject's cognitive response to thoughts about acceptance of family, society and life in the future.

Regret why I couldn't be close to my father, when I died, I couldn't get along with my father, that's the first regret I realized when I was an adult. (SL 244-246).

The feeling of regret caused the subjects rethink actions they have done and in the past. The memories led them to feel deep sadness.

If I feel different, that's from when I was small, right, since I was small, I've been different from the others. Boys play ball, marbles, if I don't like playing like that, I tend to play with girls. (HN 4-8).

Being transgender has never been something taken for granted. There must be some factor underlying that decision. Davidson, et al (in Barmawi & Silmi, 2017) argue that being transgender can be influenced by factors such as environment, social, and culture. Conditions in the family, such as trauma due to domestic violation can cause this transformation too. It is similar to a study by (Soejonto, 2016) that the condition when a father abandons his wife and children can leave trauma that imprints.

Lev (in Dresner, et al., 2013) states that transgender people are mostly ignored and become a minority which is risky to depression, suicide, and hatred. These risks emerge due to the feeling of worry about family and society views on them.

A common perception from the society is in the form of negative connotations, and this can trigger transgender people to worry. The

worries are not about the society perception, but also unpleasant treatments.

The worries felt by the transgender people were due to the society negative verbal and nonverbal responses, causing the people afraid of socializing with the environment. In research conducted by (Indriastuti, et al., 2020) explain in certain situations, transgender people will pretend to be someone else other than their identity or even have two sides depending on their present roles.

Transgender people have also realized that they are inseparable from bully. In research conducted by (Ariba & Humsona, 2020) assume that the cause of verbal and nonverbal discrimination in transgender people is due to the doctrine that is not only by family, but also mass media which then emerge the issue of transphobia and hate.

For me, the person can accept it, meaning it doesn't get to the point where it hurts, it hurts seriously. But never mind I do not not bother. (HN 134-136).

With so many pain felt by transgender individuals in the society, the family is the last hope for transgender people in helping the process to achieve their life goals. This is in line with the findings of (Safri, 2016) that recognition from families regarding the gender transformation has a positive impact on transgender social life. Family care makes transgender self-confidence reappear.

Bono et al (in Juwita & Kustanti, 2018) found that individuals who try to take action for forgiveness have a low desire to take revenge against the perpetrator and have a desire to avoid and try to improve relations and do good with the perpetrator.

Support from close friends and family can give spirit and chances for the subjects to be better people and reduce their hate to the perpetrators. It is in line with what is stated by (Fajarina, et al., 2017) that emotional support from family and friends can shape the subject's modest self by showing his true identity.

Yes, the hope is that transwomen are empowered, able to work formally, and continue in education that there is no discrimination, I'm

sorry. Everyone wants to express themselves freely, but with a reasonable dose, don't be unreasonable. We have to comply with the norms to be dignified. (RA 254-258).

Some hopes addressed to the society were such as to be no discrimination and space to express without any bad stigma that can hinder the transgender people. It is in accordance with (Herwina, 2013), namely transgender people realize they are a minority, so they unite, help each other, and behave according to their environment,

The life goals of the transgender people were a stimulus from their family and close friends resulted from a long process that led them to surrender to their existing condition. One of the goals was to be able to work without any negative views from the environment to earn money for himself and family and support transgender communities activities.

The above is in line with the research of Jasruddin and Daud (in Khafsoh et al., 2022) that the existence of transgender people in people's lives tends not to be confrontational because they have the advantage to enter the economic field such as make-up, entertainers, and some others. However, transgender is a minority group that is vulnerable to acts of discrimination.

The forgiveness of the subjects formed throughout the course of their social life was dynamics. Gradually the subjects accepted all the things that happened both from within the subjects, as well as from outside such as the community. The sincerity held by the subjects made them focus on a better life goal. Ghani (in Pusvitasari & Jayanti, 2020) also states that forgiveness comes from a state of mind that involves thoughts, feelings, thus releasing anger and revenge.

In the rapid development of a new era, many discoveries has brought up important knowledge related to the field of guidance and counseling. Concepts and theories in counseling science are developing rapidly and useful in assisting counselors in responding to future challenges. The existence of the counselor's work is also at stake in order to answer the

challenges in the social, political, and cultural life of a society that continues to grow.

In research conducted by (Lestari & Sefitri, 2016) Reveal that sincere acceptance from counselors to counsees must be prioritized in the implementation of counseling for transgender people. Since the transgender people have felt enough rejection by the social environment, the counselor's approach is the main approach that can be used to explore their experiences. In line with the previous idea, (Hermawan & Putra, 2017) explain that the counselor has the main goal of preventing discrimination from happening again, protecting it, and helping change the behavior and thoughts of the counselee to be better.

Community counseling is one of the counseling interventions in community settings as a support system or also known as community outreach. Community outreach has a design to identify community resources, such as opportunities to work and career potential, Gybers & Hederson (in Suryahadikusumah & Yustiana, 2016).

The following are alternative counseling services and community counseling goals that counselors can use in helping transgender counsees:

Paradigm Of Community Counseling Approach

Wisdom-Oriented Counseling Approach (WOCA)

Wisdom-Oriented Counseling Approach, abbreviated as WOCA is a paradigm in a counseling approach. WOCA approach can facilitate transgender people to abilities to anticipate and solve problems related to themselves and the environment with the aim of developing the potential of counsees optimally.

In research conducted by (Kharis et al., 2021) found that WOCA is the right approach to make clients choose a better option than suicide when someone gets frustrated and depressed.

WOCA is a complete package of counseling interventions that are not based on rigid steps, but certain standards and indicators. WOCA orients towards the creation of wisdom,

and counselees who come from various backgrounds need to be identified by counselors through several approaches, namely: rapport establishing, problem exploration, problem definition, problem solution development, decision making and motivating, terminator.

Six Continuums in Transgender Counseling

The idea of the six continuums of transgender has a goal to provide direction and views for counselors in conducting the counseling process with the background of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender counselees. The continuums have been adapted to the characteristics of the existing culture by adhering to moral values and religion that accompanies society in Indonesia so that it is suitable to be used by counselors who deal with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

This idea was developed (Azmi, 2015) who recommends six continuums of transgender counseling to overcome various problems faced by lesbian, gay bisexual, and transgender people. The six continuums of transgender counseling are self, relationship, different of feeling, identification, spiritual intervention, acceptance of environmental.

The Purpose Of Community Counseling

Community certainly has various meanings that can be seen from various perspectives, including specific groups that reflect a certain identity such as race, interests, and place of residence with all its culture. It is expected to be carried out by considering community aspects as a basis. Thus, it is hoped that the counseling will have a wider role and become more effective about the goals, more efficient and wider in scope.

The purpose of community counseling is to make prevention efforts so that problems that may occur can be prevented early. This is the part where the levels of prevention to cover before and during certain problems are created (Latipun, Yustina., & Ilyas, 2015). Hence, community counseling has a broad scope, not to mention experts encourage community-based

counseling (intervention) to be applied in the wider community and not only done in schools.

Yeo et al., (2015) state that in achieving the noble goal of community counseling, counselors are not suggested to deal with interrelated and complex problems. Therefore, collaboration between counselors and other professionals is needed.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study have showed that the forgiveness in transgender people was formed from various patterns between themes. It occurs because of feelings of regret, emotional control, making peace with one's condition.

Based on the findings, it is recommended for counselors to be able to provide a service or treatment using the paradigm of the WOCA community counseling approach (wisdom oriented counseling approach) and the six continuums in transgender counseling. Further researchers are suggested to develop and design studies using a counseling approach for transgender people with broader and more complex subjects.

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