



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICARIOUS TRAUMA
AND OPTIMISM IN VOLUNTEERS OF HUMANITARIAN
INSTITUTION HILAL MERAH INDONESIA (HILMI)**

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Abstract:

Purpose: The research investigates the relationship between vicarious trauma and optimism of on-field volunteers at Hilal Merah Indonesia Humanitarian Institution (HILMI) **Design/methodology/approach:** A conceptual theoretical approach was used: optimism scale and ProQol scale ver. 5. **Participants:** The population was composed by 220 field volunteers who had served for at least ten days at a disaster in Indonesia; 140 samples were taken. **Findings:** In line analysis showed that a higher level of optimism determined a lower level vicarious trauma; conversely, a lower level of optimism determined a higher level of vicarious trauma. **Research limitations/implications:** Vicarious trauma has many impacts, especially psychological implications and effects the volunteers' work. Therefore, volunteers need to have the right qualifications, attitudes, and experiences to effectively plan and implement programs. One of the attitudes needed is optimism. **Practical implications:** The study has determined of the vicarious relationship of trauma to optimism on-field volunteers at (HILMI). This paper demonstrated the existence of a relationship between vicarious trauma and optimism.

Keywords: optimism, vicarious trauma, volunteer direct service, Hilal Merah Indonesia

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has geographical characteristics of potential disasters. Located in the ring area of the world, Indonesia is prone to earthquakes and tsunami. Volcanoes found in almost all islands also add to a possible sequence of volcanic disasters (Carina, 2018). Throughout the year 2018 National Disaster Management Agency of Republic

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Indonesia reported 1.999 catastrophic events in Indonesia. The impact caused is quite large: 3.548 people died and lost, 13.112 people injured, 3.06 million lives displaced and affected disasters, 339.969 houses heavily damaged, 7.810 moderate damaged houses, 20.608 light damaged houses, and thousands of public facilities damaged (Farisa, 2018).

In line with the opinions expressed by Crocq et al. (2005), disasters that occur in Indonesia meet five criteria of disaster aspects, namely the first, the occurrence of negative events that bring suffering to the community or people; second, causing significant material damage to change the environment; third, a large number of victims died, injured both physically and even psychologically and lost shelter; fourth, massive damage to public means, and fifth, the occurrence of public service disruption. With such catastrophic aspects, is required a coordinated handling of the related parties, for recovery and relief of affected victims.

A catastrophe that occurs in a stat affects many and various communities. The willingness and solidarity of their members is necessary to help the affected victims. National Disaster Management Authority (*BNPB Indonesian*), Constitution art no. 17 year 2011, Guidelines for Disaster Management Volunteers define disaster management volunteers as the people or groups/communities who have ability and concern to volunteer and sincere work in disaster relief efforts (BNPB, 2011).

Volunteer encounter difficulties in addition to physical problems such as stamina and illness. After distributing help, volunteers are not at rest. Nevertheless, for volunteers, it is not a problem as long as the victim can be assisted immediately. Not only physical, but the psychological aspects are also involved and impact on volunteers. Researches of Thomar (2010), Gersons (2010), Juen (2010), Marschang (2010), Djakababa (2010), Olff (2010) showed the existence of complaints of mental health between volunteers, identification of victims as friends because the contact with terrible events during work in location of disasters, sensitivity to anxiety, lack of social support, and pessimism.

The psychological implications of volunteers become independent threats to volunteers. Volunteers need to have the right qualifications, attitudes, and experience to plan and implement effective programs. One of the required attitudes is optimistic. It can essentially volunteer as long as it has an optimistic spirit and volunteering soul. Optimist gives individual support to a more successful life in every activity. Because people are optimistic to use potential owned. As field humanitarian workers or field volunteers in carrying out humanitarian tasks need to be supported by optimistic, unyielding, seeking information or science, having a passion for opening alternative solutions, consistent, and not easily complained. An optimist is better able to face-threatening situations because optimistic adopt active strategies and can adapt well.

Seligman (2005) affirms that the optimistic is an individual that can explain adverse events caused by external factors, instability, and specific causes. Halimah & Widuri (2008) explain that volunteers who participated at disaster training activities are experiencing vicarious trauma (VT) so the risk of vicarious trauma is a serious problem because its limitations.

Berger & Quiros (2014) said that the existence of vicarious trauma (VT) resulted in various problems in individuals, one of which losing the optimism in living life.

Hilal Merah Indonesia (HILMI) is a humanitarian organization under the central board of Islamic Defenders Front (DPP-FPI) which is assisting communities affected by natural disasters, accidents, war, and other humanitarian tragedies. The researchers choose HILMI respondents because of some media coverage about poor imagery in the community. As such, FPI's community organization is often related to violent and anarchistic action (Setyanto, 2017).

The research results have theoretical benefits of a positive oriented psychological theory discussion and help volunteer recognize (VT). Practical benefits of research provide additional references to subsequent research on the association of optimism on (VT) volunteer direct service.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Optimism

Elaine (2012) explains that optimism is about more than feeling good; it's about being engaged with a meaningful life, developing resilience, and feeling in control. This dovetails nicely with psychological research showing that benefits of optimism come from the ability to accept good along with bad and being prepared to work creatively and persistently to get what you want out of life. Optimistic realists, who consider being true optimists, don't believe that good thing will come if they simply think happy thoughts. Instead, they believe at a very deep level that they have some control over their destinies.

For Seligman (2008) optimism is a holistic way of view, which can see from a good side, think positively, and easily give yourself useful meanings. Optimism is a way volunteers can think positively, have good expectations in a future life, and have a way of thinking positively and realistically to look at problems.

Pratisti & Helmi (2014) affirms that Dimension of optimism are: a) temporary and permanence is a style of explanation of time-related problems, namely temporary and permanent. Or will last a long time in an individual's life. b) pervasiveness specific and universal is generalize an event that happens around it. Pessimistic tends to generalize every occurrence and think worse than an optimistic individual. c) personalization internal and external, it is a style of explanation of issues relating to the cause of individual feelings personally (internally), acting on such incidents or behaviors occurring outside (external) control. Or in other terms, whether to blame yourself or others as suffering that optimistic person assumes the source of unpleasant problems comes from outside him, while the source of the fun problem comes from within him.

Every individual (volunteer) has limitations and advantages. An optimistic attitude arises when an individual (volunteer) has a strong belief in him. That belief arises through experience or study.

Individual with optimistic characteristics believe that failure is only a temporary setback. They consider a bad situation as a challenge and they will strive to confront it.

While individual with pessimistic characteristics tend to believe bad events will last long and will destroy everything they do and that is all their fault. Several factors influence optimism among them. The experience of associating with others, ability to admire and enjoy things on others is a very powerful power, so it can help obtain optimism (Mc Ginnis, 1995)

2.2 Vicarious trauma (VT)

In conducting tasks, volunteers are often faced with the emotions of the people affected by a disaster, so they can identify themselves (volunteers) as them (victims). Emotional response experienced by people impacted directly from disaster (traumatic stress response) was also experienced by volunteers who did not experience direct disasters. Theoretically (VT), is the result of the transformation of individual experiences caused by the emphatic involvement of volunteers with disaster victims' trauma material (Courtois & Ford, 2009).

Aspect of vicarious trauma: a) compassion satisfaction is pleasure gained from doing a good job, a feeling of pleasure helping others with skills it has. (volunteers) feel positive about co-workers or individual ability to contribute to a work environment or even in a community social environment. b) secondary traumatic stress is a secondary exposure from a person (survivor/ colleague volunteer) who suffered a traumatic event. Indications of secondary traumatic stress (STS) are fear, difficulty sleeping, disturbing shadows, avoiding, remembering traumatic experiences (Stamm, 2016).

Djakababa & Olf (2010) enumerates the aspects related to compassion satisfaction: a) level of satisfaction from work. b) how well individuals (volunteers) feel doing best in their work, relates to the level of competence and control in which volunteers can feel a disaster victim. c) the level of positive support, with community social support, is becoming very important.

Menurut Pearlman & McKay (2008) affirms that individuals experiencing vicarious trauma (VT) are showing common symptoms such as, difficult to regulate emotions, difficult to accept and feel the goodness of themselves, problematic in regulating boundaries of oneself with others, problematic in a relationship, experiencing some physical problems, less sensitive to what is happening around it, loss of meaning and hope.

As workers (volunteer directs service) perform humanitarian tasks need to be supported by optimism, never give up, a spirit of seeking information/ knowledge, have a passion to open alternative solutions, consistent, and not easy to complain. Optimistic individuals are more capable of facing threatening situations because optimistic individuals adopt an active strategy and they can adapt well everywhere.

Related to vicarious trauma (VT) in individuals there are signs such as secondary traumatic stress (STS), compassion fatigue, and burnout. Vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout are related concepts. Optimism, on other hand, is emotional and cognitive status to feel that good things in life will happen. When volunteers perform

their humanitarian duties and are directly related to the traumatic situation, they can adapt themselves to the spirit of optimism (Stamm, 2016).

3. Method

The study uses quantitative methods and correlation approaches with the intent to determine if there is a relationship between vicarious trauma with optimism in volunteer direct services at humanitarian institutions Hilal Merah Indonesia (HILMI).

The participants to this research were 140 field volunteers. The research instrument used was a Likert scale, which contains an attitude statement.

The research uses two scales, number of item scales of optimism containing 36 items and the vicarious trauma scale (proQol) containing 30 items. Before the scale of research was used, trials were first conducted knowing different power indices of items from optimism and vicarious trauma scales. Trials were conducted on 30 volunteers. After analysis, was obtained 30 valid items consisting of 12 favorable statements and 18 statements unfavorable with a different power index of items of 0.99 to 0.148.

For determining the reliability of the testing, the internal consistency method was used. It is a reliability testing technique that consists of items contained in measuring instruments using alpha Cronbach technique given α (alpha) is 0.926 with total items tested as many as 36 items. The reliability coefficient is within the number range from 0 to 1.00, higher correlation coefficient number is near to 1.00, it can be said that measurements are made by the reliable researchers (Azwar, 2015).

From the results of data that scale of ProQol has been proven used by more than 1000 studies have also translated at least 17 languages to propagate which each aspect has good internal consistency, aspect; compassion satisfaction 0.89, secondary traumatic stress 0.80, and burnout 0.71. The research authors get the ProQol scale from Psychology Institute in Indonesia.

Aspects of the ProQol scale from Psychology are compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout. ProQolscale consists of 30 items, an adaptation of a measuring tool from Stamm (2016) which includes 25 favorable items and 5 unfavorable items. Before doing the data analysis by using Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, basic assumption test was used to determine the prerequisites or assumptions that apply or not, basic assumption test consisted of a normality test and a linearity test (Priyatno, 2016).

The following are the results of the normality test and linearity test.

		VT	OP
N		140	140
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	79,26	122,85
	Std. Deviation	11,024	11,180
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,107	,049
	Positive	,070	,038
	Negative	-,107	-,049
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1,270	,575
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,079	,896

a. Test distribution is Normal.
 b. Calculated from data.

Table 1: Normality and Linearity

Based on the output of the Table 1 above, it is known that the significance value of the optimistic scale (OP) is $0.896 > 0.05$ and the vicarious trauma (VT) is $0.79 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the research data tested has a normal data distribution.

				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
VT*OP	Between	(Combined)		4863,927	46	105,738	,817	,773
	Groups	Linear	Weighted	3,358	1	3,358	,026	,872
		Term	Deviation	4860,569	45	108,013	,835	,746
	Within Groups			12029,294	93	129,347		
	Total			16893,221	139			

Table 2: ANOVA Test

Based on the output in Table 2 above, the results of the linearity test obtained a significance value at the deviation from linearity of 0.746, greater than 0.05, which means that there is a linear and significant relationship between the Optimistic variable and the Vicarious trauma (VT) variable. As researched by Priyatno (2016), the decision-making method for the linearity test, if the significance at the deviation from linearity is < 0.05 then the relationship between the two variables is not linear, whereas if the significance is > 0.05 then the relationship between the two variables is declared linear, it qualifies for a correlation analysis product moment.

Results of product-moment test analysis between vicarious trauma and optimism in HILMI volunteers were obtained from the SPSS AMOS calculation showing the correlation coefficient that value of $r_{xy} = 0.14$ with $q = 0.004$ ($q < 0.05$).

Based on the initial suggestion, that there is a relationship between the vicarious trauma (VT) variable and optimism (OP) in HILMI volunteers, with results of data processing above, condition (H_a) is fulfilled between the two is significant because p

<0.05 can be explained by ($r_{xy} = -0.250$; $Sig = 0.004 < 0.05$). The correlation number shows a negative value (-) which means that the coefficient of correlation is negative, that the relationship that occurs is opposite, the large score that occurs simultaneously with the low score on other variables.

Based on the results of these calculations, the correlation that occurs between vicarious trauma and optimism in HILMI volunteers is a negative correlation where the lower optimism, the higher the vicarious trauma, on the contrary, the higher the optimism, the lower the vicarious trauma, significance value shows a value of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$) where optimism gives an input of -25% to vicarious trauma, while -75% is another factor outside of optimism, including the length of time joining the world of volunteerism, the experience of getting along with other people, the ability to admire and enjoy things in others and nature.

4. Results

The hypothesis indicates there is a vicarious trauma relationship with optimism, indicated an analysis of correlation coefficient $r_{xy} = -0.250$ significance correlation $p = 0.004$ ($p < 0.05$). There is a negative on score correlation coefficient indicating a relationship that occurs is an opponent i.e. magnitude of score that occurs along with the lower score of another variable. Significance indicates a value of 0.004, optimism gives a contribution of -25% against vicarious trauma (VT) whereas -75% is another factor beyond optimism. The condition mentioned above is that the higher the level of volunteer optimism, the lower the vicarious trauma volunteers. Likewise, the lower the level of vicarious trauma in volunteers, the lower the level of volunteer optimism.

Furthermore, related to the description of the level of vicarious trauma (VT), there were 62.5% in the moderate category, which showed a risk of negative aspects in volunteers exposed to vicarious trauma. In carrying out their duties, the volunteer directs service is often faced with the emotions of people who are directly affected by disasters so that they can identify themselves (volunteers) like them (survivors). Often volunteers are too attached to the survivor by feeling caring and fully responsible for overcoming the survivors' problems at the disaster site, this process can have an impact on physical and mental changes.

Vicarious trauma (VT) is how the body and soul react to grief, anger, and intense pain. Confusion, apathy, desire to be alone, anxiety, sadness, and pain are usually signs of vicarious trauma (VT).

Whether we realize it or not, handling traumatized survivors can have a significant emotional impact on volunteers who accompany them. Optimism, on other hand, is an emotional and cognitive status about the feeling that the good things in life are greater than the bad. When volunteers carry out humanitarian tasks and deal directly with traumatic situations, they are expected to adapt themselves to a spirit of optimism.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 For HILMI Leaders

HILMI leaders should be able to prioritize job characteristics related to the level of optimism and anxiety of volunteers. They should sort and choose which volunteers are ready to go to the disaster area, and which volunteers may not be ready to go directly to the disaster area.

5.2 For Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to be able to prepare themselves as best as possible when they are ready to go to the disaster area, this is necessary to avoid the trauma of anxiety that can cause a loss of optimism.

5.3 For Future Research

Researchers can then use other variables as moderating variables on the relationship between vascular trauma (VT) and optimism in-field volunteers at humanitarian agencies so that they can add useful insights for various parties.

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