

Traumatic Tendencies After a Traffic Accident

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ABSTRACT

Traffic accidents often occur unexpectedly. Not only causing physical injuries but also psychological which is often referred to as a traumatic experience. The trauma experienced by the victim can last for years because the events experienced are entered into an unforgettable memory. The purpose of this study is to describe traumatic tendencies in individuals who experience traffic accidents. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The participants in this study were three people who had experienced moderate or severe traffic accidents. The assessment used in this study used interview techniques. Each subject in this study experienced different traumatic tendencies. The results of the study showed symptoms of traumatic tendencies that occurred after a traffic accident, namely anxiety, fear, and difficulty sleeping. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that traffic accidents cause traumatic tendencies in individuals who have experienced them. Keywords: Traumatic tendencies, traffic accidents.

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Introduction

Accidents are dangerous events that often occur in everyday life suddenly. It is noted that traffic accidents are one of the most significant contributors to the death rate in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) recorded nearly 3,400 people dying on roadways worldwide every day (WHO, 2015). According to Law No. 22 of 2009 on Road Traffic and Transportation, a traffic accident is an unexpected and unintentional event on the road involving a vehicle with or without other road users resulting in human casualties and loss of property.

Traffic accidents are a severe problem in Indonesia because they are still one the highest causes of death. As reported by Detikoto, Djoko Setijowarno, Academician of Soegijapranata Civil Engineering Study Program and Deputy Head of Empowerment and Regional Strengthening of the Indonesian Transportation Society (MTI) stated that the fatality rate due to traffic accidents in Indonesia was 27 thousand people per year on average. This number equals 3-4 people dying per hour (Rahadiansyah, 2023).

Firstly, based on data from Republic of Indonesia Police Traffic Corps, the number of traffic accidents in Indonesia in 2021 reached 103,645, exceeding the cases in 2020 of 100,028 cases. Secondly, based on data from the Semarang Resort Police published by the Semarang Regency Central Bureau of Statistics (2020), there were 484 traffic accident cases in Semarang, with 121 serious injuries, one moderate injury, and 539 minor injuries, with a total loss of IDR 296,690,000. It is also recorded that the highest contributor to traffic accidents is motorcycles, with a percentage of 73%.

Traffic accidents certainly impact those who experience them physically and psychologically (Putra et al., 2022). Individuals who experience accidents can experience excessive trauma, anxiety, and fear, affecting individual development (Putra et al., 2020). Trauma is a psychological wound that is quite dangerous for an individual's life because it can reduce intellectual, emotional, and behavioral power (Hatta, 2016). Trauma can occur in individuals who experience traumatic events such as sexual violence, accidents, natural disasters, armed conflicts, or other life-threatening events (Hatta, 2016). Traumatic tendencies are one of the effects of a traffic accident. Research conducted by Dzahabiyya et al. (2022) showed that traffic accidents caused 42% of trauma. Based on this, researchers are interested in knowing more about the traumatic tendencies experienced by individuals with traffic accident experiences.

Method

This research uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. The sample in this study was three participants who had experienced moderate and severe traffic accidents. Participants consisted of two women and one man with an age range of early adulthood. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview technique for each individual on 17 - 19 May 2023. This research focuses on the experiences of individuals who have experienced traffic accidents, so the analytical method used is a life history case study (Bungin, 2011).

Results

First participant (P1) SE (P1) is 22 years old, female. Based on the results of the interviews, it is known that P1 has had a moderate accident. The accident that happened to P1 happened about two months ago, causing trauma for P1 in riding a motorcycle. The chronology took place in the afternoon when P1 returned from her friend's rented house, and at that time, the weather was rainy. P1 used a mask and glasses so that her glasses became fogged. Because of this, P1 failed to notice the parking attendant in front of her and was late to brake her motorbike; as a result, P1 swerved to the right causing her to fall. From the results of P1's interview, the accident she experienced caused P1 to have a swollen leg, so she could not walk normally for two weeks and had to use a cane.

From the accident she experienced, P1 admitted that she was traumatized to ride a motorbike again. P1 shared that she had difficulty sleeping because she had to follow the schedule for taking medication and experienced overthinking about lectures every night; specifically, she was afraid of not being able to attend lectures and finish assignments well. Furthermore, P1 admitted that she was even more careful when riding a motorbike, especially when the weather was raining; P1 chose not to leave the house until the rain stopped.

From the accident, P1 admitted that she was afraid and did not dare to ride his motorbike and had to ride with friends or take online transportation for several months. P1 tries to fight the feeling of fear because the accident she experienced causes discomfort when seeing other people's accidents. In overcoming her problem, P1 is now trying to overcome her fears by calming down so she does not panic or divert her mind by thinking about more positive things.

Second participant (P2) KJ (P2) is 23 years old, male. According to the findings of the interviews, subject P2 experienced a severe accident. The accident occurred about seven years ago when he returned from hadrah practice with two friends during rainy conditions. P2 could not see the road clearly due to fogged-up glasses, so he hit a car parked on the side of the road. P2 explained that after the accident, he experienced a dislocation in the lower shoulder blade, swelling in his left hand, and his neck, which was hit by glass splinters, possibly from a motorcycle mirror.

P2 stated that he had been traumatized for up to 6 months from this incident. P2 did not dare and tended to avoid riding a motorbike. During these six months, P2 explained that he used to hitch a ride with a friend to attend school. This accident made P2 regret driving a motorcycle and bringing his friend on the same motorcycle when the traffic accident occurred. In addition, P2 admitted that he dared to ride a motorbike again after a year of the accident. P2 always tries to develop positive thoughts to fight his fears when he rides a motorbike again. At this time, P2 can ride a motorbike at short and long distances and is no longer afraid. P2 explained that he is currently more careful in driving a vehicle on the road so that traffic accidents do not happen to him again.

Third participant (P3) SPS (P3) is 22 years old, female. The results of the interviews found that P3 had experienced a moderate accident. The accident happened about five years ago and was traumatic for P3, especially when crossing the road. The chronology occurred in the afternoon when P3 returned home from tutoring at her school. A drunk driver hit P3 while standing on the side of the road to cross and take a bus that goes to her house. The accident left P3 with a nosebleed and minor injuries to her leg.

From the accident, P3 admitted that she was traumatized. P3 explained that she had difficulty sleeping after the accident for one month because of the pain in her body from being hit and the memory of the accident that kept coming back. Additionally, P3 admitted that she often dreamed of being hit and falling because this incident was the first serious accident she had experienced. This experience eventually led P3 to become afraid to cross the street for a year. However, P3 said that this incident has made her more alert.

P3's accident caused her to feel scared until now when she sees other people's accidents. P3 avoids seeing the accident directly or on video because it makes her scared and emotional, even though it is not a serious accident. At this time, P3 had overcome her fear of crossing the street alone, which she previously had to cross with a friend, because P3 realized that when she was going to study outside the city, she had to be independent. However, the fear of seeing an accident is still insurmountable even though she wants to be able to deal with it so she can also help others when someone has an accident. From the interviews, it is known that P3 requires special treatment to increase her courage and overcome the traumatic problems she has experienced.

Based on the assessment results, two major impacts occurred to the participants in this study, namely the physical and psychological impacts.

Discussion

Physical Discomfort Interviews conducted with P1, P2, and P3 showed that the traffic accidents they experienced impacted the participants' physical discomfort. Firstly, P1 experienced swelling in her leg and could not walk normally for a week. Then, there was a dislocation in the lower shoulder blades, swollen hands, and injuries to the neck due to glass splinters experienced by P2. Lastly, P3 had a nosebleed and a minor injury to her leg. The physical discomfort of the participants interfered with the participants' activities for several weeks or even up to a month.

Psychological Changes The experience of traffic accidents on P1, P2, and P3 caused psychological changes experienced by the three participants. P1 and P2 experienced anxiety when they were going to ride a motorbike alone which lasted for a month or more. Fear when seeing traffic accidents causes P1 and P3 to remember the accidents they experienced. P1 and P3 also experienced difficulty sleeping after the accident because they imagined dreams related to traffic accidents and also had to follow the treatment schedule. Moreover, P2 has regrets until now because he brought his friend on the same motorcycle when the accident occurred. P1 also experienced overthinking related to her lectures due to the accident that made her unable to attend lectures for several days. According to Putra et al. (2020), individuals who experience accidents can experience excessive trauma, anxiety, and fear, affecting individual development. The results of this study are also

supported by research conducted by Boelen et al. (2022) regarding psychological changes after traffic accidents. Individuals with experience in traffic accidents experience stress, trauma, and sadness and do not accept the changes that occur after experiencing an accident (Boelen et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on three participants, it was found that all three had accidents, with two participants in the moderate category and one participant in the severe category. This study concludes that traffic accidents have an impact on the three participants both physically and psychologically. As time passed, the three participants could generally carry out their daily activities again. Physically, the subject does not appear to be disabled. However, psychologically the three participants still had traumatic tendencies due to the traffic accidents they had experienced. So, there is a need for psychological intervention to deal with these traumatic tendencies.

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