

AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING STYLE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL A CHILD CALLED “IT” BY DAVE PELZER

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ABSTRACT

The research entitled "The Main Character's Authoritarian Parenting Style in the Novel A Child Called 'It' by Dave Pelzer" is focused on identifying and describing the authoritarian parenting style of the main character in Dave Pelzer's novel. In addition, this study also identifies and describes the impact of authoritarian parenting by the main character on children in the novel. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, with an objective approach to describe and illustrate authoritarian parenting and the impact of authoritarian parenting by the main character on children who are included in the intrinsic elements of the novel. Data collection which was carried out uses note-and-read techniques, in which the reading of the novel A Child Called 'It' involved all dialogues in the novel to determine the actions of the main character's authoritarian parenting and the impact of authoritarian parenting on children contained in the novel. The results of this study indicate that authoritarian parenting is a form of parenting that is not good for children. This is indicated by the presence of some unfavorable parental behavior towards children. This study shows that the authoritarian parenting style is divided into four parts and each part shows how the behavior of parents with authoritarian parenting style towards children. The impact of authoritarian parenting is divided into two parts, namely the positive impact and the negative impact. Authoritarian parenting can have a positive impact even though more negative impacts are received by children.

Keywords: The main character, Authoritarian parenting style, A Child Called “It” novel

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a form of expression of feelings that are conveyed communicatively in the form of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that are included in written form with language which is a tool in conveying the author's intentions with aesthetic goals. One of the most popular literary works is the novel. Based on this, the novel became the author's choice to be the object of research. In the novel itself, the depiction of the story described by the author is always centered on the main character who is the main focus and most told by the author. In line with the opinion of Wahyuningtyas &

Santosa (2011: 3) which explains that the main character is the character whose story is given priority in the prose in question, he is the character who is told the most, both in terms of the perpetrator of the incident and the person affected by the incident itself.

The main focus in this study refers to the main characters in the novel *A Child Called "It"*, namely parents and children. Parents in the novel *A Child Called "It"* are one of the main characters that are the focus of discussion in this study because their presence plays an important role in the story. Parents have an important role in the development of the child. The parenting style given by parents to each child determines the condition of the child's growth and development. There are several types of parenting styles, one of which is authoritarian parenting. Authoritarian parenting is the focus of discussion in this study.

According to Puspita Sari (2020: 2-3) it is said that authoritarian parenting is a parenting style given by parents to children based on applicable rules and forcing children to behave and behave according to the wishes of parents.

Some of these explanations support the basis of the study of the novel *A Child Called "It"* by Dave Pelzer with the formulation of the problem regarding how to describe authoritarian parenting by the main character towards children which is the focus of discussion in this study. Based on this, this study aims to describe the authoritarian parenting pattern that is carried out by the main character towards the children contained in the novel.

The description of the child's attitude can be seen from the form of parenting given by parents to children. Authoritarian parenting style is one of the parenting styles that is the focus of discussion in this study. This is because the form of upbringing depicted in the story is in accordance with the depiction of authoritarian parenting.

DATA SOURCE

The source of the data in this study is the text in the novel *A Child Called "It"* by Dave Pelzer. The novel *A Child Called "It"* is an autobiographical novel published by Health Communications, Inc. (HCI) in 1995. At its first launch, this novel stole a lot of readers' attention because the story is taken from a true story that was directly experienced by the author of the novel, namely Dave Pelzer. This novel presents a complex, dramatic, and emotional story which makes it interesting to study.

METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method with an objective approach in analyzing the actions of the main character's authoritarian parenting, as well as the impact of authoritarian parenting on child characters in Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called "It"*.

The descriptive method according to Faujiah et al., (2021) is a research method that explores or describes the social situation that is thoroughly researched. Qualitative research according to Moleong (2018: 6) :

“Qualitative research is research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the subjects in research, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions in a holistic way and by

means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and the use of various natural methods.”

Meanwhile, the objective approach is an approach that focuses on the elements, known as intrinsic analysis. Where trying to see as a whole from what is a building element from within the work itself (Karma, 2015: 63).

The data source used in this study is a novel by Dave Pelzer entitled *A Child Called "It"*. Collecting data in analyzing the authoritarian parenting style of the main character in the novel *A Child Called "It"* is done by identifying this novel using reading and note-taking techniques. The reading technique in this study was carried out by reading the entire story in the novel in order to determine the authoritarian parenting style of the main character by analyzing it through the dialogues, actions and comments depicted in the story. In analyzing the authoritarian parenting style of the main character in the novel *A Child Called "It"*, the writer uses Diana Baumrind's theory. Existing data is classified, after which it is interpreted according to the formulation of the problems in this study. In the final stage, a description of the results that have been analyzed is carried out, after which data is concluded.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this section, some of the theories that form the basis of this research will be described. Some of the theories used in this study are theories about the main character, parents, and authoritarian parenting.

1.) Main Character

The description of the story in the novel itself consists of several supporters in building the story, the character is one of the supporters in a story, and the main character becomes an important part in building the story in the novel. As explained by Nurgiantoro (2018: 259), it is said that

“The main character is the character whose story takes priority in the novel in question. He is the character who is most told about. Both as perpetrators of incidents and those affected by incidents. In fact, in certain novels, the main character is always present in every incident and can be found on every page of the story book in question.”

2.) Parents

Parents have the responsibility to educate, nurture, and guide their children to reach certain stages that lead children to be ready for social life (Ruli, 2020: 144). Therefore, the role of parents is very important in the development of children, as illustrated in the novel *A Child Called "It"* which makes parents the determinants of the personality, happiness, and conditions of child development.

3.) Authoritarian Parenting

Every parent has a different parenting style. Therefore, there are several types of parenting styles that parents give to children. One of them is authoritarian parenting which is the focus of discussion in this study. Santrock (2011: 404) explains Authoritarian parenting A restrictive, punitive

style in which the parent exhorts the child to follow the parent's directions and to respect their work and effort. Firm limits and controls are placed on the child, and little verbal exchange is allowed. This style is associated with children's social incompetence, including a lack of initiative and weak communication skills.

According to Robinson et al. (1995), there are several aspects contained in authoritarian parenting, including:

a. Verbal Hostility

Verbal hostility is shown by the attitude of parents who have high emotions by always scolding, shouting, and yelling at their children, showing disapproval in the form of arguing with their children.

b. Corporal Punishment

The existence of physical punishment in disciplining children in the form of hitting, slapping, pushing, and giving punishment to children for no apparent reason.

c. Nonreasoning, Punitive Strategies

Punish children without giving explanations, give punishments by leaving children somewhere, make threats against children, ignore children's feelings, and children are not allowed to refuse orders and punishments given.

d. Directiveness

Regulating children by telling children what to do at the will of parents, demanding children to obey orders and rules made by parents, scolding and criticizing when children's behavior does not match parental expectations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authoritarian parenting is a form of parenting that shows more inappropriate attitudes of parents towards children. In the study of the authoritarian parenting style of the main character in Dave Pelzer's novel entitled *A Child Called "It"*, the theory of Robinson et al. (1995) in describing the acts of authoritarian parenting carried out by the main characters contained in the novel by dividing it into several aspects including verbal hostility, corporal punishment, nonreasoning, punitive strategies, and directiveness.

A. Verbal Hostility

Data 1

"Do you hear me?" Mother yelled. "Look at me when I'm talking to you!" As I looked at her, Mother snatched a carving knife from the counter top and screamed, "if you don't finish on time, I'm going to kill you!" (Pelzer, 1995, P.51).

Based on the sentence "if you don't finish on time, I'm going to kill you!" illustrated how the mother acted emotionally towards Dave. The sentence explains that the mother ordered Dave to complete the homework that his mother gave Dave and it had to be completed on time, according to

the time set by the mother. From this sentence, the mother said that if Dave did not finish his work on time, then the mother would kill Dave. The emotional attitude of the mother by uttering words in the form of threats towards Dave, shows a form of authoritarian parenting in the aspect of verbal hostility.

Data 2

When the lady was clearly gone, Mother closed the door in a rage. “You little shit!” she screamed (Pelzer, 1995, P.75).

In the sentence "You little shit!" she screamed that his mother told Dave showed an authoritarian parenting style. The sentence describes the mother screaming at Dave by saying things that a mother should not say to her child. This happened after a woman from social services left. At that time, a woman from social services came to ask Dave directly about Dave's condition. The woman from the social service asked Dave several questions to determine whether Dave was living comfortably and being treated well by his parents. Dave answered some of the woman's questions very carefully, but Dave's answers did not match his mother's expectations. Because of this, after the woman from the social service left, the mother showed an emotional attitude by shouting at Dave and throwing bad words. The attitude of the mother who shouted at Dave because Dave's answer did not meet the expectations of the mother, showed an act of authoritarian parenting in the aspect of verbal hostility.

Data 3

Just as I thought, Mother gave me a sound thrashing before we reached the station wagon. As soon as we were in the car, she ordered me to lie on the floor of the back seat, where her boys took turns stomping me with their feet for “mouthing off” to them and Mother (Pelzer, 1995, P.83).

The act of authoritarian parenting, especially in the verbal aspect of hostility given by the mother to Dave, is shown in the sentence Mother gave me a sound thrashing. The verbal hostility that Dave received began when there was a commotion between Dave and his brothers at a shopping mall. Because of this, the mother showed an emotional attitude by yelling at Dave and ordering Dave's brothers to beat Dave. The mother's emotional attitude shows verbal acts of hostility which are included in authoritarian parenting.

B. Corporal Punishment

Data 4

“You’ve made my life a living hell!” she sneered. “Now it’s time I showed you what hell is like!” Gripping my arm, Mother held it in the orangeblue flame. My skin seemed to explode from the heat. I could smell the scorched hairs from my burnt arm. As hard as I fought, I could not force Mother to let go of my arm. Finally I fell to the floor, on my hands and knees, and tried to blow cool air on my arm (Pelzer, 1995, P.28).

The sentence above shows an act of authoritarian parenting in the form of corporal punishment given by the mother to Dave. This action is depicted in the sentence "**Gripping my arm, Mother held it in the orangeblue flame.**" The situation described by Dave shows that his mother gave physical punishment to Dave because he had violated his mother's rules. Because of this, Dave had to receive corporal punishment, namely lying on a burning stove. From these actions, it is clear that his mother did not provide a very cruel authoritarian parenting style towards Dave.

Data 5

*Again she repeated, "Eat it!" I held my breath. The smell was overpowering. I tried to focus on the top corner of the diaper. Seconds seemed like hours. Mother must have known my plan. **She slammed my face into the diaper and rubbed it from side to side** (Pelzer, 1995, p. 35)*

The sentence "She slammed my face into the diaper and rubbed it from side to side", shows how the mother gave Dave an authoritarian parenting style in the form of corporal punishment. The punishment for his actions was that Dave had to kiss his little brother's poopy diaper.

Data 6

"You have 20 minutes! One minute, one second more, and you go hungry again! Is that understood?"

"Yes, ma'am."

***"Look at me when I'm talking to you!" she snapped** (Pelzer, 1995, P.51).*

The dialogue above between the mother and Dave contained in the novel shows the authoritarian parenting style given by the mother to the child and is included in the aspect of corporal punishment. This is shown in the sentence "Look at me when I'm talking to you!" she snapped, the mother's action of giving Dave a slap because Dave didn't look at her when his mother was talking to him became a clear picture showing authoritarian parenting in the aspect of corporal punishment because of the physical punishment given by the mother.

Data 7

*If I looked at her or one of her sons without her permission, **I received a slap in the face** (Pelzer, 1995, P.50).*

The mother's corporal punishment action described by Dave in the story is a form of authoritarian parenting that Dave received from his mother. This is illustrated in the sentence I received a slap in the face. From this sentence, it was explained that the mother would give Dave a slap if Dave looked at his mother and siblings. From these actions, it shows an act of authoritarian parenting in the aspect of corporal punishment in the form of corporal punishment against children.

Data 8

After he left, Mother would yank me out of bed and drag me to the kitchen. While I stood shivering in my pyjamas, she'd smack me from one side of the kitchen to the other (Pelzer, 1995, P.32).

The sentence above is Dave's explanation contained in the novel. In the sentence She'd smack me from one side of the kitchen to the other, it shows the act of authoritarian parenting given by the mother to Dave. Based on this sentence, the authoritarian parenting style given by the mother to Dave was in the form of physical punishment.

Dave got hit repeatedly from his mother after his father left home. The father left the house after an argument between him and his mother. The mother beat Dave because Dave was the reason that caused Dave's mother and father to fight. The act of beating that his mother gave to Dave shows an act of authoritarian parenting in the aspect of corporal punishment.

Data 9

By the end of the session, my nose bled twice and I was missing a tooth (Pelzer, 1995, P.33).

Dave explained how his mother gave him physical punishment. Seen in the sentence My nose bled twice and I was missing a tooth. Based on this sentence, Dave explained that his mother took her anger out on Dave by hitting Dave and causing Dave's nose to bleed twice and causing Dave to lose his teeth. The mother's response in expressing her anger by beating Dave made her action fall into the corporal punishment aspect of authoritarian parenting.

C. Nonreasoning, Punitive Strategies**Data 10**

"Do you hear me?" Mother yelled. "Look at me when I'm talking to you!" As I looked at her, Mother snatched a carving knife from the counter top and screamed, "if you don't finish on time, I'm going to kill you!" (Pelzer, 1995, P.51).

The words made by the mother towards Dave were "if you don't finish on time, I'm going to kill you!", from these words, it was clear that the mother gave Dave a threat to kill him if Dave did not complete the task given the mother is on time. This shows an act of authoritarian parenting which is included in the aspects of non-reasoning, punitive strategies in the form of threats to children.

D. Directiveness**Data 11**

Before I bolt out of the car again, she says, "Tell 'em ... Tell 'em you ran into the door." (Pelzer, 1995, P.08).

The data above illustrates the acts of authoritarian parenting carried out by parents towards children. This can be seen in the sentence "Tell 'em ... Tell 'em you ran into the door". This sentence illustrates that the mother ordered Dave if someone asked about the wound above Dave's eye, so Dave had to answer that the wound above his eye was caused by hitting the door. The mother's actions

show that the mother is giving authoritarian parenting in the aspect of directiveness because of the attitude of controlling the mother and demanding that Dave obey her orders.

Data 12

*Mother claimed that she had seen me that very day playing on the grass, **which was absolutely forbidden by her rules** (Pelzer, 1995, P.27).*

Based on Dave's statement above in the novel, it shows that there was an act of authoritarian parenting given by the mother to Dave which is contained in the sentence Which was absolutely forbidden by her rules. From this sentence, Dave explained that because of Dave's actions that were not in accordance with his mother's rules, namely by playing with his siblings on the grass during school breaks. For this reason, the mother scolded Dave and gave Dave a punishment. The mother's response to Dave's actions illustrates the authoritarian parenting style given by the mother to Dave. Based on the sentence above, the authoritarian parenting style shown is included in the aspect of directiveness because the mother scolds and criticizes Dave when Dave's behavior is not in accordance with the mother's orders.

CONCLUSION

A Child Called "It" is a novel created by Dave Pelzer based on real experiences he has gone through. Based on the analysis of the main character's authoritarian parenting in Dave Pelzer's novel entitled A Child Called "It", it can be concluded that the novel shows authoritarian parenting by the main character in the story, namely his mother towards Dave.

In analyzing the authoritarian parenting style described in the novel, the theory of Robinson et al. (1995) as a basis for determining authoritarian parenting by the main character. In this study, authoritarian parenting is divided into several aspects based on the theory of Robinson et al. (1995), namely, verbal hostility which is shown by the high emotional attitude possessed by parents and carried out towards children, corporal punishment, namely parents who carry out punishment in physical form which aims to discipline children, nonreasoning, punitive strategies are the application of punishment without reason which are clear and in the form of threats regardless of the child's feelings and the child's refusal to accept punishment is not allowed, and directiveness which is the commanding attitude of the parents so that the child does something against the will of the parents.

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