KONSELING RELIGI

Envy: The Dark Side of Close Relationship

Aufa Abdillah
Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga, Salatiga, Indonesia
aufa.abdillah@iainsalatiga.ac.id

Hamidulloh Ibda
Institut Islam Nahdlatul Temanggung, Temanggung, Indonesia
h.ibdaganteng@inisnu.ac.id

Abstract

Human interactions will always exist and humans are patient in need of relationships with other people, but from that interaction, an inevitable conflict will arise which is the dark side. One of them is Envy. From a psychological viewpoint, this is a very interesting phenomenon to be studied in more depth, including everything related to Envy as the dark side of interpersonal relationships. The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that cause Envy, the subject who is the target of envy, the behavior, and attitudes towards the envied person, the emotional reactions of envy, and the impact and solutions to minimize the negative impact of envy. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach by giving an open questionnaire to 50 students at one of the Pondok pesantren in Salatiga. The results showed that envy is the negative dark side of interpersonal relationships. There are factors that cause envy, the target of envy, behavior towards the envied person, emotional reactions that arise, and the impact it causes. Envy is an inevitable phenomenon that arises from interpersonal relationships in the context of social interactions. However, there are solutions that can minimize envy.

Keywords: Envy, Dark side of close relationships, social interaction.

Introduction

Some researchers explain the concept of human relations. Most people are highly motivated to form and establish close relationships, and they are generally scrupulous and earnest in maintaining their relationships. Moreover, the form of interpersonal relationships represents a very mandatory source of psychological well-being (Pietromonaco, et. al, 2013; Aiyuda, 2017; Harry et. al, 2020; Cheng et. al, 2022; Shin, et. al., 2022). This indicates that psychological well-being is an integral part of interpersonal relationships. In Sels's study, he asked some respondents to seek any indications about case of what makes them feel meaningful, some respondents gave answers that showed that it was interpersonal relationships that truly made them feel more meaningful (Laura et. al., 2016). Research on the quality of life shows that interpersonal relationships are strong predictors for measuring happiness and life satisfaction compared to most domains in life (Hisasue, et. al., 2020).

Research on loneliness and loss proves that deep sadness, longing, and hopelessness are experienced by someone who lacks and/or loses a close relationship (Eva et. al., 2013). On the other hand, interpersonal relationships can serve as a source of conflict, tension, disappointment, and interpersonal relationship problems. Complaints about interpersonal relationships commonly occur, among them studies that show that interpersonal nature (interpersonal traits) that trigger a lot of conflict and tension in a person's relationships cause more distress than other stressors (Svenja et. al., 2018). Persistence in close relationships is not only associated with a poor psychological state but also poor physiological outcomes such as increased cardiovascular reactions and decreased endurances (Mujcic et. al., 2018).

There are several explanations regarding the dark side of human actions, attitudes, and behavior (Brian et. al., 2013). First, is the dark side which concerns dysfunctional, distorted, distressing, and destructive aspects of behavior. Bohart described it as a form of evil. This crime has characteristics because it systemically reduces the functioning of human abilities (Arthur et. al., 2013). Second, the dark side concerns deviance, betrayal, transgression, and violence. Awkward, abusive, and chaotic behavior can annoy oneself and others, and behavior that crosses boundaries that can be devastating. Third, the dark side concerns the exploitation of guilt. The repeal of excessive values or sources of value, the manipulation of indifferent attitudes, the cruelty

without mercy, the restriction of freedom, reflecting on the egocentrism of social life, and the difficulty in developing collective well-being in a cultural climate of individualism. Fourth, the dark side concerns unfulfilled, unanswered, demeaned, and unallocated human endeavors. For example, losing love and love that can never be fulfilled, will cause pain. Fifth, the dark side that concerns unsettled, unwelcome, disliked, and disgusting. These people consider that the unsettling is normatively avoided, shunned, and isolated. Sixth, the dark side concerns objectification. Treatment of a person is inhumane, diminishing individual rights, and grouping individuals into statuses is a way of killing a human character.

Research shows that friendships and interpersonal relationships are often fraught with difficulties and obstacles and sacrifices (Fang et. al., 2011). Research shows that a comprehensive approach to human relationships requires not only an understanding of the dark side aspects of relationships but integrating those aspects into the theory of relationships and understanding of relationship systems. Interpersonal relationships have the potential to cause conflicts, tensions, disappointments, and deep problems that arise in the relationship in interpersonal can result in impaired health and well-being (Goloshumova et. al., 2019).

Based on the explanation above, reveals an interesting phenomenon about the existence of problems rooted in negative consequences in an interpersonal relationship. Human interaction will always be established and interconnected in need of relationships with others, but its interaction will arise an inevitable conflict referring to the dark side of interpersonal relationships, one of which is envy.

Based on the theory of social comparison, social comparison is always present throughout human life, especially in the social context, a person with strong social ties will have a higher tendency to compare himself with others. They are always evaluating and always want to know the quality of opinions, positions, and abilities in social situations. When one gets that another person with the same qualities but gets a luckier position, or with a lower quality but also luckier, then it will lead to a sense of injustice, this is where envy (malice) arises. If someone is in the same position, but the other has better qualities, it will bring out positive envy and trigger enthusiasm and motivation to develop themselves.

The purpose of this study is to understand malice, especially the factors that cause the onset of envy, the target of envy, behavior, and attitude toward the person being spiteful, the emotional reaction of envy, the impact arising from envy, and the solutions carried out to minimize envy. Envy is a feeling that the advantages possessed are covered by the advantages of others, which are characterized by feelings of ungratefulness, as well as expecting the gifts that others have to disappear regardless of whether they pass to the spiteful person or not.

Method

This research applies descriptive quantitative research methods, with open questionnaires in written analysis using descriptive statistical data. Subjects are 50 female *santri* out of 225 total number, ranging from 18-24 years old. The study was designed using a descriptive quantitative research method approach, along to conduct descriptive studies of envy which is categorized as the dark side of interpersonal relationships. This research focuses on questions.

1. "What factors cause envy?"

2. "Who is the target of envy?"

3. "What is the attitude and behavior towards the person being envied?"

4. "What reactions appear in envy?"

5. "What are the effects or consequences that arise from envy?"

6. "What's the solution to deal with envy?"

The research focused on the identification of the symptoms of envy as the dark side of interpersonal relationships. The dark side of interpersonal relationships is a negative consequence of destructive conflicts arising from relationships between one person and others. It has negative implications for one's psychological condition and concerns the form of envy, how envy arises, what the reactions of behavior, attitudes, and emotions are, and how to minimize it. This will be revealed in the research using an open questionnaire.

The informant of this research was a *santri* in one of the Islamic boarding schools in Salatiga. The total number of informants is 50 informants. Data collection

techniques are performed by giving open questioners to research informants, as these studies use descriptive quantitative research methods. An open-ended questionnaire is a series of research questions that researchers organize with this type of open-ended question so that research informants can answer more freely based on their experiences of envy that have or been being experienced. Data analysis is conducted by content analysis methods for descriptive quantitative approaches by searching for keywords, categorizing and recreating, then looking at data frequency and data interpretation.

Theoritical Review

Envy

In psychology, envy is a symptom of a mental disorder (Mubasyaroh, 2013, p. 127) that requires the touch of a counselor (Falah, 2016, p. 163). Envy has been conceptualized as a universal human emotion (Tara et. al., 2005), and is an experience shared by most people regardless of their culture (Quintanilla et. al., 2013). Envy is a feeling that arises when a person is better than ourselves, jealous, or emotional displeasure when knowing the advantages of those around him (Vilayanur et. al., 2017).

This several-year study examines the philosophy of envy. A simple definition is, envy is a complex emotion (Protasi, 2021). Envy can be manifested in the form of merely pent-up feelings and recent research says envy is manifested on social media openly and known to many people (Adrian et. al., 2022). Envy is explored like jealousy whose nature is a social emotion that has an impact on caring for oneself and others. The impact of envy is not only a moral problem, but also an impact on loneliness, friends, neighbors, and social and political environments (Thomason, 2015; Protasi, 2022; Mengmeng et. al., 2022).

Many definitions of envy emphasize its unpleasant nature (Navarro-Carrillo, et. al., 2017). More specifically, envy can be defined as an emotion characterized by feelings of inferiority, hostility, and hatred caused by the realization that another person or group of people enjoys the attributes that a person desires (object, social status, attribute, or quality) (Niels et. al., 2011). Therefore, envy can be considered an unpleasant subjective response to unfavorable comparisons with others who have an advantage in the domain of personal relevance (Briki, 2019).

The findings show that envy is the emotion that is indicated to appear most in competitive situations in the academic world (Niels et. al., 2011). The finding that envy in a psychiatric review becomes a very interesting phenomenon to be studied more deeply (Navarro-Carrillo, et. al., 2017). Envy is an unwanted universal emotion that is prone to permeate and condition different areas of everyday dyadic, interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Furthermore in a study, it was shown that wanting something that others have can cause discomfort in the self-feeling person not only because of the suffering inherent in it as a result of the lack of desired attributes, but also the perception of inferiority related to the envious person (Gery et. al., 2022).

From the studies and research above, it can be concluded that envy is a symptom of mental disorder, human emotions, jealousy, and complex emotions, which are manifested secretly or openly through social media. Envy has an impact on loneliness, friends, neighbors to the social and political environment. Envy did not appear suddenly. However, it is caused by feelings of inferiority, hatred, and hostility, which arise in competition including in the academic room.

Dark Side of Close Relationship

The study of close relationships between individuals today shows an interesting fact because many close people carry out destructive and dehumanizing behaviors that damage interpersonal relationships, romanticism, and personal and relational losses (Gery et. al., 2022). That is, close relationships keep the dark side already revealed in psychological research. Factors of fractured close relationships are not only loving, and emotions, but also envy, poor verbal communication, emotions, negative expressions in friends and relationships, and negative information from other friends (Kostić, et. al., 2022; Shin et. al., 2022).

Close relationships do not always connote and point to the fact of a good relationship, because it also embodies envy. Not only interpersonal, friends, colleagues, even occur in a company or institution (Erin et. al., 2005). Relationships with close friends have the potential to give rise to envy. Close relationships are related to interpersonal relationships, friends, social interactions, and humans in general (Brian et. al., 1998). This indicates that envy is very dangerous in a friendship.

In other studies, it is also called envy as a dark side in interpersonal relationships that is the focus of this study. Things related to malice include factors of malice, the target of malice, the characteristics of spiteful people, the reactions (psychological impacts) that arise in malice, the social impacts that arise, and ways of minimizing malice (Ameen, 2005).

Close relationships will become degraded and damaged when envy, malice, self-inaccessibility, lack of communication, fear of retribution for mistakes occur, and loss of empathy (Charles et. al., 2022). Envy is prone to occur in adolescent boys and adolescent girls. During friendship, envy becomes the dominant factor in adolescents which has implications for the decline in the quality of close relationships in them (Yue et. al., 2022). Envy also occurs in couples who are in close and long-distance contact (Weber et. al., 2022). This indicates that close relationships between teenagers and couples have a dark side.

From the above study, it is concluded that close relationships have a dark side that needs to be revealed. The dominant dark side is envy, emotions, poor verbal communication, and negative expressions in friends, and others. The dark side of close relationships does not only occur in friendship relationships but also in close people including with partners.

Result

Factors that cause envy

The results of the research obtained from this open questionnaire show that the factors causing envy are; the first (1), interpersonal comparisons (24%) such as beauty problems, achievement, intelligence, social status, or feelings that represent others are superior to themselves. The second (2) is hatred and hostility (22%), this hatred soars when listening to the voice or seeing the person being envied, and it arises due to incompatibility that settles into feelings of envy. The third factor (3) is the attitude and behavior of others who are unpleasant (20%). This refers to unpleasant treatment received from others, frequently scolded, bullied, and harassed. Other factors are admiration for others, arrogance, and friendship problems.

Visualization of the factors causing the onset of envy according to the research findings can be seen in the figure below:
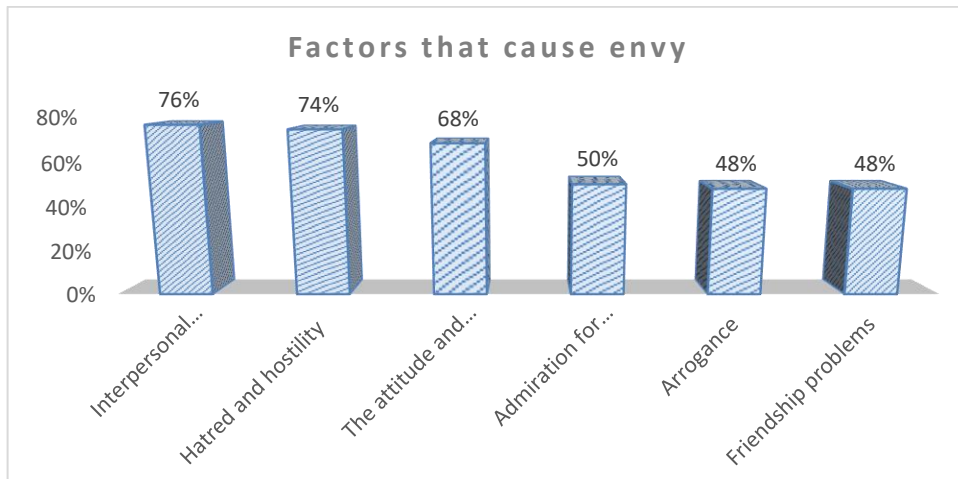

Picture 1. Factors that cause envy

People Who Are The Object Of Envy

The research shows that people as the object of envy are; the first is the closest people (78%), these closest people include friends, close friends, and relatives. The second is people who are suspected to have an advantage over envious people (72%), likely having a beautiful face, richer, more creative, smarter, and more prominent abilities or talents. The third is others who have unpleasant attitudes and behaviors (64%). This attitude concerns those being pretentious kind, organizers, quiet, and an attention seeker. Other objects of envy are those who are arrogant (44%), hated (34%), rivals (32%), home-wrecker (32%), and the rest who interfere in the affairs of others.

To see more visually the findings of the target of malice can be seen in the image below:
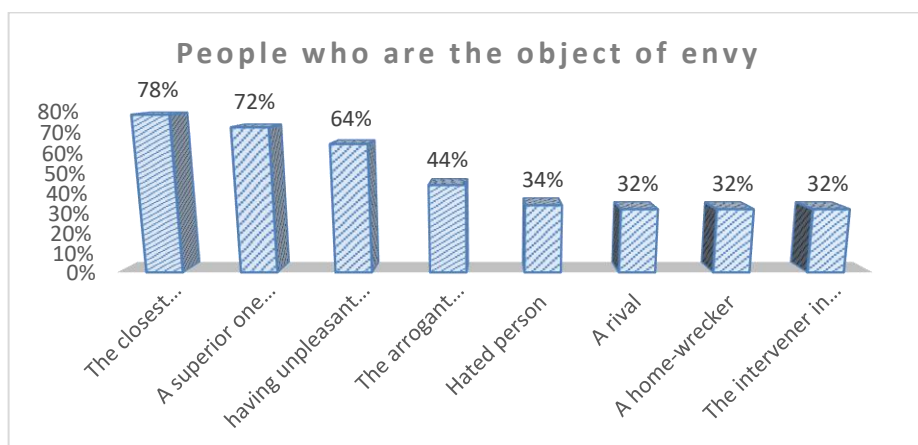
Picture 2. People who are the object of envy

Behaviors and Attitudes Toward People Who Are Envied

The research shows that behaviors and attitudes toward the envied one are; The first is being indifferent even in a hateful heart (74%). Being indifferent means letting the envied person do as desired without any satire or reproach from the envious, but inwardly one is filled with hatred and feelings of disgust. The second behavior and attitude are being kind but having deep down full of hatred (72%). This attitude means that, in the presence of envious people, it doesn't show any hatred, still keeps on a smile, and is friendly even though the heart is full of hatred, as the purpose to maintain interpersonal relationships. The third attitude and behavior are being wise and praying to others (66%). This means that the envious one seeks self-introspection, maintains a good attitude, and sets interpersonal relationships. The next behavior and attitude are gossiping and looking for faults (48%), denouncing in the presence of people who are envied, insinuating (40%), trying to disturb and hurt (40%), and rivaling others (38%).

The findings of data related to attitudes and behaviors towards spiteful people can be seen in the figure below:
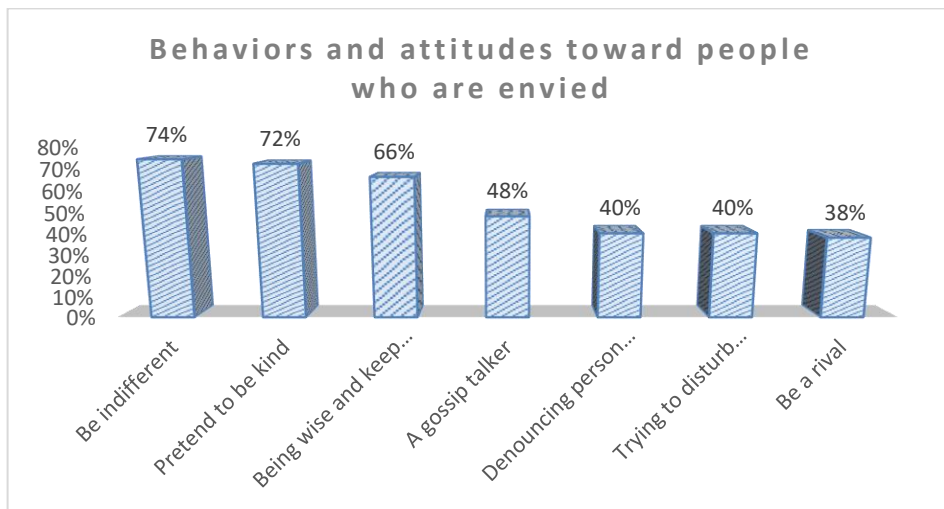
Picture 3. Behaviors and Attitudes Toward People Who Are Envied

Psychological Reactions

As for the emotional reactions that arise due to envy towards others are; the first is an annoyance (80%), it is a feeling of being irritated, and *mbedigil* (a feeling that a person being envied is troublesome). The second reaction is hatred (76%) because it cannot compete with the person being envied. The emotional reaction is longing or frustrated desire (64%), as the condition when one wants what others have such as potential, or talent (something that cannot be transferred) but he has no ability to achieve but will cause frustration. The next emotional reactions are despair, sadness, anger (52%), inferiority, ordinary feelings (50%), and resentment (48%). The presentation of data related to reactions or emotions that arise due to envy can be seen in the figure below:
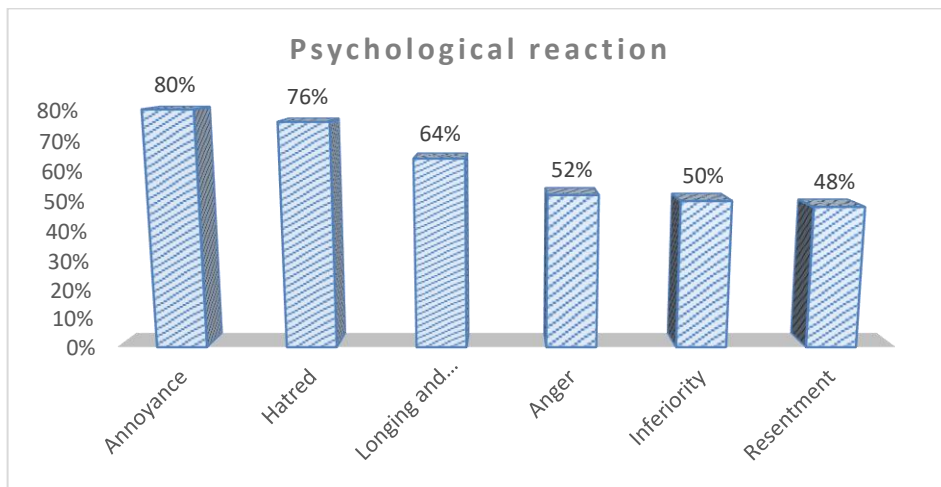
Picture 4. Psychological Reactions

## *The Impact Or Consequences Arising From Envy*

The impact or consequences arising from envy are; first, discomfort and unsettled (90%). Envy causes discomfort feelings when meeting an envied person, the heart will be unsettled, and awkward. The second impact was hostility (82%), and breakups (76%). Another impact is being motivated to improve self-quality (66%), misunderstandings (62%), and feelings of self-dislike (54%). A visualization of images related to solutions to overcome envy is presented in the image below:
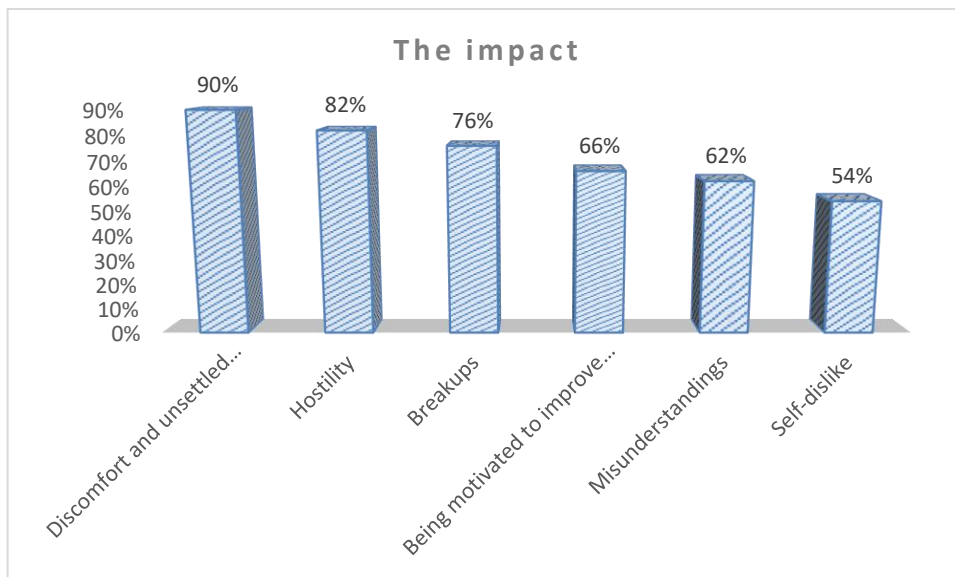
Picture 5. The impact or consequences arising from envy

Solutions To Minimize Envy

The solution to minimizing envy is; the first is being patient (26%). The term of patience here is followed by an effort to improve self-quality. The second solution is gratitude and self-introspection (20%); being grateful for what God has given and self-introspection is a means for everyone has different advantages and disadvantages. The third solution is to improve and maintain interpersonal relationships (16%). The next solution is trying to get rid of feelings of envy, staying away from people who are being envied, upgrading self-potential, seeking any activities, sharing experiences with others, and praying to be kept away from this disease. A visualization of images related to solutions to overcome envy is presented in the image below:
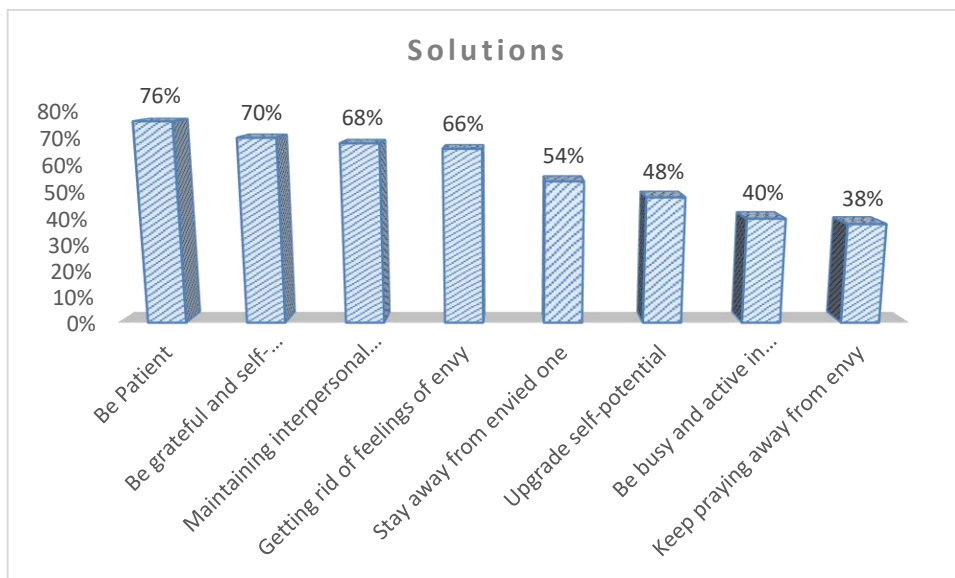
Picture 6. Solutions to minimize envy

Discussion

The results showed that the factors causing envy towards others are interpersonal comparison, hatred and hostility, and the attitudes and behaviors of unpleasant ones (Cowan-Jenssen, 2011). Social comparisons can elicit emotions such as envy, which can affect social interaction (Navarro-Carrillo, et. al., 2017). Comparing oneself to others also occurs universally across the human culture (Niels et. al., 2011). From personal attributes such as beauty and intelligence up to wealthy assets like cars

and houses, the process of social comparison can significantly influence how well-organized a person feels about oneself (Steinbeis & Singer, 2013). Today's facts show that envy is still seen as a mistake socially, emotionally, and morally reprehensible. According to the psychoanalyst perspective, each person has the potential for envy, however, it regards how much envy appears and manifests is determined by the environment (Arnocky et. al., 2016).

Among the objects targeted by envy is the closest person or buddy (Cowan-Jenssen, 2011); the closer people are, the potential for conflict occurs. Expectations of reciprocal relationships from the closest people are excessive, so when expectations do not match reality, then conflict and envy are tied together (Brian et. al., 2013). Others who are suspected of having advantages over envious people, as well as unpleasant attitudes and behaviors people, are also dominated in causing the form of envy among others (Eissa et. al., 2016). Phenomena in interpersonal relationships have represented many conflicts. In addition, when people need attachment and closeness to others, they also fear the consequences in an interpersonal relationship, because interpersonal relationships always have a destructive dark side (Brian et. al., 2013).

Behavior and attitude towards the envied person seem to be indifferent even though one is inwardly full of hatred, wise, and keep praying (Ameen, 2005). Among the characteristics of an envious one is the sight of his eyes filled with hatred and always hoping others get an accident or bad things (Tai, et. al., 2012). Envy always arises during human development in the context of personal and interpersonal relationships (Ameen, 2005). It also has a positive contribution to human development, because humans are always motivated to increase their potential (Lange, et. al., 2015). Nevertheless, when the efforts to increase one's potential do not produce what is expected, it will have a destructive impact, among which is self-loathing. When an envious person is down, he will experience an emotional reaction (Thompson, et. al., 2015). The emotional reaction of envy is a feeling of annoyance towards the subject being envied, hatred of both envied people and oneself accompanied by feelings of longing and frustrated desire, such as anger and hatred because they are not able to have what others have (Thompson, et. al., 2015). Envy also triggers a person to display aggressive behavior both verbal and non-verbal actions (Navarro-Carrillo, et. al., 2017). People who experience envy will feel insecure, and an uneasy life because of unstable emotions, and sensitive feelings.

Interpersonal relationships always have dark sides and negative consequences. When one interacts around the circle of environment, there will continuously be a comparison, whether from appearance, business results, social status, etc. (Cowan-Jenssen, 2011). The principle of equity theory assumes that people become depressed when their input/output ratio is negatively compared to the ratio of people perceived as superior. This perceived injustice is likely to help motivate people to rebuild balance (Alvarez-Cuadrado, et. al., 2012). In particular, the researchers argue that "envious people often seek to restore balance and to improve their own standing" (Sterling et. al., 2015). Thus, we argue that social destruction or the emergence of destructive behavior is due to one potential way to minimize the outcome of others in an attempt to look better (or make others look worse). As a result, it will interfere with interpersonal relationships (Eissa & Wyland, 2016).

The impact that arises in interpersonal relationships due to envy is the emergence of a condition of uncomfortable and unsettled feelings (Cowan-Jenssen, 2011), the onset of hostility, and the disconnection of a relationship that has been established closely. Although envy is more often seen as destructive in interpersonal relationships, it can motivate a person to perform self-actualization (Yu et. al., 2017).

The concept of envy is often confused with jealousy. As for envy, it has the same meaning as malice, however, according to the author in the terms used in Indonesia that envy is used in positive (benign/ghibthoh) and negative (malicious/hasad) meanings, while malice has more negative connotations. Envy and jealousy have a very clear difference: jealousy arises when someone has something but there is fear and worry if something they have will disappear or move into the hands of others, while envy arises when others have something that is not owned by themselves (Parrott & Smith, 1993; Lin et. al., 2015).

The current literature, based on research on envy, establishes that there are two types of envy, namely positive envy (benign / ghibthoh) and negative (malicious / hasad). Positive envy will trigger a person's motivation to improve self-quality and develop oneself, while negative envy (malice) decreases motivation and causes feelings of inferiority (inferiority), and triggers a tendency to damage the person by being spiteful. Malice arises from comparison with a person of higher quality (above). Based on the classical theory of social comparison theory by Leon Festinger (Festinger, 1954;

Fakhri, 2017), explains that a person always tends to know how the quality of opinions, positions, and abilities in social situations, self-evaluation in a social context will always appear in life dynamically. When one gets that someone else with the same qualities but gets a luckier position, or with a lower quality but also luckier, then it will lead to a sense of injustice, this is where malice arises. If someone is in the same position, but the other has better qualities, it will bring out positive envy and trigger enthusiasm and motivation to develop themselves.

Conclusion

In this study, there is a lack of depth in uncovering and studying envy. In addition to envy, many dark sides arise that become phenomena in social interaction that have a worse impact than envy. The background and reasons for taking the topic of envy are also less strong considering the many negative symptoms that appear in social interactions such as social jealousy, gossiping behavior, and social harassment. Envy has negative and positive concepts and does not always have negative connotations, further research is expected to be able to study and test envy in two concepts, namely positive (benign / ghibthoh) and negative (malicious / hasad) by using qualitative studies and testing treatment in depth to copy negative heart problems with experimental qualitative methods. In this study, the envy aspect that was explored was not in-depth, further research is expected to dig deeper into the completeness of the data.

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