

# Analysis of Early Childhood's Bullying Behavior in Kindergarten in Medan City

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**Abstract.** The aim of this research is to analyze and describe the characteristics of bullying behavior in early childhood and to describe the efforts of teachers in dealing with the problem of bullying in early childhood, so that a mapping of bullying problems in kindergartens in the city of Medan was produced. This research is an initial research in the context of developing a model for preventing and handling the problem of bullying in early childhood at kindergartens in Medan City. The research method used was a descriptive qualitative approach. Research subjects were taken based on purposive sampling technique. The instruments used were observation sheets on bullying behavior that occurred in kindergartens and interview sheets on teachers' efforts to deal with bullying problems. The steps used to analyze the research data consist of data collection, data reduction, and conclusion drawing/verification. The results of this study indicate that bullying behavior in early childhood is dominated by physical bullying such as hitting and pushing. Meanwhile, the teacher's effort in dealing with bullying behavior is to immediately reprimand and provide an explanation to children about moral behavior, namely behavior that is permissible and not permissible.

**Keywords:** bullying, early childhood, kindergarten, teacher's effort.

## 1 Introduction

Changes in the times that are increasingly rapid have an impact on various aspects of life, especially in the field of education. The implementation of effective and efficient education services in educational units is strongly influenced by various factors. One of them is the conducive atmosphere created by all school components that play a role in implementing learning services for students so that the expected educational goals are achieved. But in reality, the goals of education in schools have not been fully achieved. Schools, which are supposed to be placed to study and develop self-character, turn out to be the main locations for bullying practices. This is very contrary to Law (UU No. 23 of 2002) article 54 concerning child protection, which states that schools must become anti-violence zones.

Early childhood education is a form of education that can stimulate growth and development in early childhood, such as physical, intelligence, social, emotional, cognitive, language, and communication. In the growth and development of early childhood, there are several periods that directly and indirectly affect an educator when dealing with early childhood, such as the child's sensitive period, the egocentric period, the imitating period, the rebellious period that occurs in children, the exploration period and the group period.

In the era of globalization as is happening at this time, many problems arise in early childhood education, one of which is bullying behavior. ICRW (International Center For Research on Women), which conducted research in 2015, found that 84% of Indonesian children experienced cases of violence that occurred at school. This percentage is a higher number than cases of school violence that occurred in the Asian region [1]. Meanwhile, in 2019 PISA (Program for International Students Assessment) found that in Indonesia there were still many children who experienced bullying behavior, namely 41%. This condition is higher when compared to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries, namely 22.7%. Indonesia ranks fifth out of 78 countries where bullying has occurred among students [2]. Bullying behavior can begin to occur in childhood at the age of 3 years. Where, children begin to participate directly in bullying behavior [3, 4].

During the group period, children still experience difficulties and social and emotional problems, so children can behave in bullying. *Bullying* is a form of violence that is often carried out by a child or group of children to hurt or disturb other children who cannot defend themselves [10]. A child can be categorized as a victim of *bullying* when he receives negative or aggressive treatment intentionally, continuously, repeatedly, and all the time, and has power than the perpetrator so that he has difficulty defending himself. Victims of *bullying* feel significantly more threatened and less able to control their situation [3].

Negative or aggressive treatment experienced by victims of *bullying* is in the form of harsh and hurtful statements or names, treated as something funny, completely ignored or removed from the group, or left with a specific purpose [10]. Apart from that, there is also aggressive physical treatment such as being hit, kicked, pressed, pushed, or locked in a room. They may also accept spreading false news about themselves or trying to make other students dislike them, as well as other hurtful things.

The phenomenon of bullying is not new, but until now it has not been optimally handled. There are two main reasons that can explain why bullying is important to study. First, there is self-awareness and knowledge of basic human rights not to accept differences, whether physical, ethnic, religious, or gender. Second, there is a serious impact that will be experienced by the victims and perpetrators of bullying themselves. For victims, of course, it would be traumatic to come to school, the school would become an unpleasant place, and children would become depressed and afraid. Bullying perpetrators will get negative labeling for the child himself, for example, a naughty child. And if this is experienced in early childhood, it will have a bad impact on further development [5].

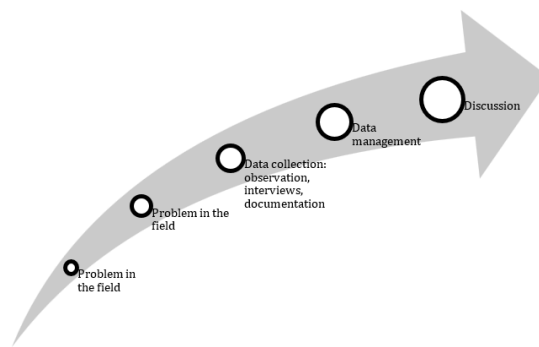
Preschool children are very vulnerable to bullying behavior. During recess, you can often hear children making fun of their friends to the point of crying, bullying, purifying, and even fighting and it is certain that the child who gets this kind of behavior is the same child. Events like the above can be categorized as acts of bullying. Often there are children who mock and hit their friends as part of the entertainment in playing and socializing. Generally, children who are sensitive, unable to socialize, children who are easily agitated, children who are passive, children who tend to give in, and are easily depressed are also potential victims of bullying. In addition, children who have deficiencies have the potential to become victims of bullying. However, this condition often goes unnoticed and escapes the attention of parents, teachers, and even people around.

Based on the results of research in several kindergartens, in 2005 it was shown that there was bullying had a negative impact on their playing activities, for example, children were more comfortable playing alone than with their friends. Another impact experienced by victims of bullying is experiencing various kinds of disorders which include low psychological well-being where the victim will feel uncomfortable, afraid, low self-esteem,

and worthless, poor social adjustment where the victim feels afraid to even go to school not wanting to go to school, withdrawing from society, even wanting to commit suicide rather than having to face the pressures of humiliation and punishment [7]. Based on the background of the problems that have been described, the researchers felt the need to conduct an analysis of bullying behavior in early childhood at Kindergartens in Medan City [12].

## 2 Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach model which aims to reveal how the characteristics of bullying behavior in early childhood and the efforts of teachers in dealing with bullying problems in kindergarten. Qualitative research is research that is conducted by relying on qualitative data collection (non-numeric data, such as words and photographs). Qualitative researchers tend to rely on the inductive mode of the scientific method, and the main goal of this type of research is exploration or discovery. The research design can be seen in the image below:



**Fig.1.** Research design

The research subject has a very strategic role because the research subject is the data about the variables that the researcher observes. Subjects in this study were determined through purposive sampling. In taking the sample, the researcher has determined certain characteristics in advance of the object to be sampled, in accordance with the stated objectives. The subjects in this study were children aged 4-6 years who were bullied in kindergarten. The objects in this study are the characteristics of bullying behavior that occurs in early childhood in kindergarten and the efforts of teachers in dealing with the bullying problem [9].

In this study there were three stages of research, namely the pre-field stage, the field activity stage, and the intensive analysis stage. The pre-field stage is an activity carried out by researchers before collecting data, consisting of: (1) Develop a research design that will be carried out, (2) Choosing the research location, (3), Manage license (4) Assessment and assessment of field conditions, (5) Selection and use of informants, and (6) Preparation of research equipment. The field activity stage is an activity carried out by researchers before collecting data, consisting of: (1) Understand research background and self-preparation, (2) Entering the field, namely conducting observations and interviews with children who are victims of bullying and teachers in kindergartens related to the characteristics of bullying behavior that occurs in schools and the efforts made by teachers in dealing with bullying

problems, and (3) Participate while collecting data. The intensive analysis stage, consisting of: (1) Collect data according to the research instrument, (2) Analyzing the data that has been obtained from the field activity stage, and (3) Providing conclusions based on the results of the research data management [11].

Data collection techniques in this study are through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is a systematic and structured observation and recording of a condition or symptom on the object of research. Observation is a technique or way of collecting data by making observations of ongoing activities [13]. In this study, the observation technique used aims to collect data on the characteristics of bullying behavior and teachers' efforts to deal with bullying problems in kindergarten. An interview is a conversation conducted by two parties with a specific purpose. An interview is a conversation between two parties, namely the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who gives answers to questions. In this study, researchers conducted interviews with teachers in kindergarten regarding teachers' efforts to deal with the problem of bullying at school. A document is a record of events that have passed. This technique was used to collect data on photos of bullying incidents, photos of interviews with teachers, student data, and school profiles.

Data analysis is "the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, by grouping data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns, selecting important parts to be learned, and make conclusions so that it is easy to understand. Furthermore, data analysis in qualitative research is carried out when data collection takes place, and after completion of collection in a certain period. The steps used to analyze data are Data Collection, Data Reduction, and Conclusion Drawing/verification [12].

The validity of the data is the suitability between the data obtained by the researcher and the existing data on the research object. To increase the validity of research data, a technique that can be used is triangulation, namely looking for differences and reviewing data from data sources to determine that research results are more precise and accurate. Triangulation in this study is based on research sources. This research is a part of the research roadmap which is illustrated by the fishbone diagram.

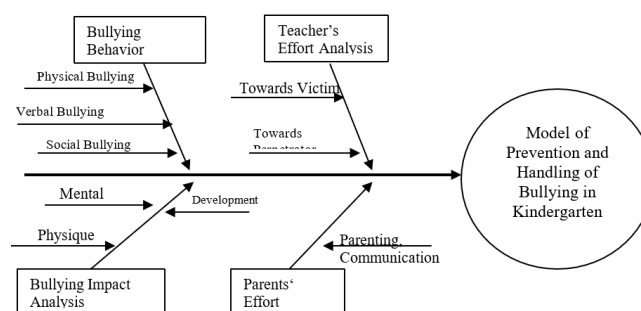


Fig.2. Fishbone diagram of research roadmap

### 3 Result and Discussion

Bullying is indeed a very scary scourge for young children, this can affect the development of young children in all aspects of the child's present or future life, bullying occurs when there are victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of bullying. Based on various literature, bullying is divided into three divisions, namely verbal, non-verbal and

psychological bullying. Every child wants recognition of their existence, children who are unable to socialize with their peers have a high potential to become bullied. Other research claims that bullied children will become bullies within the next four years. The role of teachers and parents is very broad, namely to detect various actions or attacks committed by children against other children. Establish good communication with the children so they can report or tell if the bullying occurs against friends or the child himself.

Behavior that can be categorized as bullying is: (1) Physical. This is a type of bullying that anyone can see because there is physical touch between the bully and the victim. For example: slapping, kicking, spitting, yelling, and throwing things. (2) Verbals. This is a type of bullying that can also be detected because it can be caught by the sense of hearing. For example: cursing, insulting, dubbing, accusing, spreading gossip, slandering, publicly humiliating, and, rejecting. (3) Psychological. This type of bullying is the most dangerous because your eyes or ears don't catch it if you aren't alert enough to detect it. Practice bullying occurs silently on the monitoring radar of the teacher at school. For example: looking cynically, silence, isolate, humiliate, stare and sneer [6].

Bullying behavior that occurs often does not receive more attention from parents and teachers so the impact that occurs on victims and perpetrators is too late to be known by the surrounding environment. In this case, bullying has negative effects, namely the emergence of problems of anxiety, depression, and decreased learning ability because he has difficulty concentrating and a decrease in his memory so the child's academic achievement will decrease significantly. Children who experience bullying may seem able to overcome the impact of bullying that occurs on them. But actually, maybe they are still struggling with inner distress within themselves. If children with this kind of experience do not receive proper assistance and treatment, they will develop into children who appear to be behaviorally strong and normal, but at the same time are psychologically vulnerable children.

Based on the description of the results of observations of students at school, the characteristics of bullying behavior that appear in early childhood tend to be verbal bullying and physical bullying. The verbal bullying behavior displayed by children is in the form of mocking, laughing, and comparing. While physical bullying behavior in early childhood is hitting and pushing.

When viewed from the results of teacher interviews regarding the teacher's efforts in dealing with bullying problems, both verbal, physical, and social bullying, the data shows that kindergarten teachers tend to do four things, namely reprimand the perpetrator, give advice to the perpetrator, find out the roots the problems and causes of these behaviors arise, as well as provide motivation or reinforcement to children who are victims.

Parents' education also influences their views about their child's bullying behavior in the preschool age range or in the early childhood category. Parents who are highly educated will have a good perspective of understanding bullying that occurs in preschool. They want to get involved to provide early intervention in preventing this behavior. Parental involvement at the same time illustrates that parents have a broad understanding and view of bullying behavior in children at preschool or kindergarten age because of the level of education they have. Bullying behavior for kindergarten children who do not receive early intervention or are allowed to occur by teachers and parents is often the initial trigger factor for the emergence of this behavior repeatedly and has a negative impact. Parents who are involved in providing early prevention of child bullying behavior in the kindergarten play an important role in supporting children's personal development and parents are also role models for their children including in bullying behavior.

Bullying is a form of violence perpetrated by a child or group of children with the

intention of hurting or disturbing other children who cannot defend themselves. The absence of friends of victimized children can make them psychologically and socially vulnerable, making them more vulnerable to becoming easy targets. On the other hand, bullies seem to be preferred as playmates, especially other aggressive boys. This aggressive child affiliation can lead to an increase in bullying behavior. The results showed that the behavioral characteristics of bullying in early childhood tended to be verbal and physical bullying. When viewed based on child development, the age of 4-6 years is the age period when children's language development increases rapidly. Children already have language skills in accordance with good and correct grammar rules. The vocabulary has developed well in terms of quantity and quality.

Language acquisition in early childhood is strongly influenced by various factors, including external factors, namely knowledge, upbringing, and socio-economic. Parenting style greatly influences language development because parenting style can form a toddler's personality in the growth and development of his language. If parents display negative grammar, then children will quickly imitate it.

According to Hurlock, motor development is the development of controlling physical movements through the coordinated activities of nerve centers, nerves, and muscles. Before development occurs the child will be helpless. These conditions will change rapidly at the age of the first 4-5 years of life after birth. Children begin to be able to control rough movements. The movement involves broad limbs that are used for walking, jumping, running, tiptoeing, swimming, and so on. After the age of 5 years, there is a major development in better coordination control involving the smaller muscle parts used for gripping, throwing, catching a ball, writing, and so on.

In relation to bullying behavior displayed by children, is very closely related to moral understanding in children. Moral reasons are an important point that must be instilled as early as possible because morals will later determine how children behave in the future [8]. The instilling of established moral values in children will enable them to behave politely and politely to anyone, be able to respect others who are older than them, obey rules, and be patient, honest, and willing to respect others [8]. Conversely, if a child lacks a good moral understanding, it will be easy for the child to display negative words or actions that can harm others.

## **4 Conclusion**

The characteristics of bullying behavior that appear in early childhood in kindergarten are tending to verbal bullying and physical bullying. Most teachers and parents did not give a serious attention towards bullying in young children. Young children who have bullying intentions will seek out other young children who seem aloof and children who are usually weak. The perpetrators usually mocking, laughing, comparing, hitting and pushing. Young children who bullied others tends to invite other children to take part in bullying. One of the efforts to avoid bullying in early childhood is through parenting activities. These parenting activities provide understanding to parents about bullying and its dangers for the development of children, as well as having the understanding and ability to avoid bullying behavior in children. Parenting can be done in various ways, including visits to students' homes, inviting parents to school, and case conferences. Children who bully and those who both bully and are victimized have one characteristic in common: they behave more aggressively than other

children and they do so on a regular basis. It has repeatedly been shown that victimized children cannot defend themselves efficiently. Teachers often feel overwhelmed when confronted with victimization. Bullying is typically a social phenomenon that requires both the presence of aggressive children in the group and the passivity of other children and adults in order to develop into a chronic pattern. Nevertheless, some individual deficits seem to increase children's vulnerability to becoming victimized.

Critical thinking skills and creativity are part of the 21st century skills that are very necessary and essential to be developed in learning both at the early childhood and college level. Case methods and team based projects can be used as methods to stimulate students' critical thinking skills and creativity. Kindergarten teachers tend to do four things, namely admonishing perpetrators, advising perpetrators, finding out the root causes and causes of this behavior, and providing motivation or reinforcement to children who are victims, in dealing with bullying problems at school.

## **Acknowledgement**

We thank all parties involved in this research. We are hoping this research could solve the bullying behavior in kindergarten and spread awareness to teachers, parents, and general public. Every human being especially children really want to be accepted in their environment, they want to be recognized for their existence, and they are considered to exist. Every child starting to go to school must be able to adapt himself to the environment in which he is located. This is because children need friends and friends in their life. For teachers, it is better to involve parents more in handling bullying problems and providing assistance to both victims and perpetrators and for other researchers, it can deepen the analysis specifically on victims of bullying and perpetrators of bullying. Instilling a sense of empathy is very important for children so that they care about friends who are in trouble or remind friends who have done wrong with kind words. Also teach children to report if something happens at school, you can do this by inviting children to tell about their daily lives at school. Teachers also play an important role in building a good bridge with children so that children want to be open and tell about the problems that children are facing. PAUD educators need to remind children of the difference between bullying (involving an imbalance of power) and conflict (involving disagreement between children of equal power). Explain that it's never wrong to ask an adult for help in a situation involving bullying. Creating an environment free from bullying in the world of early childhood requires adults and children alike to understand that bullying is unacceptable, hurtful, and preventable and to take responsibility for stopping it.

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