



The perception of attachment effect in parents and peers on aggressive behavior in male adolescents

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Abstract: Interaction among children with their parents and peers has an important role in developing aggression in adolescents. Negative interaction can form children's negative perception of attachment to their parents and peers. In turn, it facilitates adolescent's negative schemes from childhood to adolescence. Negative scheme children are generally easy to get anxious, difficult to trust another person in interaction, and aggressive. This study aimed to examine the perceptions of attachment effect to their father, mother, and peer on male adolescents' aggressive behaviors. The subjects of this study were 31 adolescents aged 12-15 years old, who lived in PSMP Antasena in Magelang. They were selected through purposive sampling technique. The data were collected using aggressive behavior scale and modification of parents and peer attachment inventory. The method used for analyzing data was multiple regression. The results of the analysis showed that $R=0.688$, $p<0.01$, indicating that the perceptions of father, mother and peer attachment significantly can predict aggression in male adolescents.

Keywords: perception of attachment; aggressive behavior; adolescent

Abstrak: Interaksi antara anak dengan orangtua dan teman sebaya memiliki peran penting dalam pembentukan perilaku agresi pada masa remaja. Interaksi yang negatif antara anak dengan orangtua dan teman sebaya akan membentuk persepsi kelekatan yang negatif pada anak. Hal tersebut memfasilitasi pembentukan skema negatif sejak masa anak-anak hingga masa remaja. Anak yang memiliki skema negatif pada umumnya pencemas, sukar percaya ketika berinteraksi dengan orang lain, dan agresif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh persepsi kelekatan ayah, ibu, dan teman sebaya terhadap perilaku agresi pada remaja laki-laki. Subjek penelitian adalah 31 remaja usia 12-15 tahun yang tinggal di PSMP Antasena Magelang, yang dipilih dengan teknik *purposive sampling*. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan skala perilaku agresif dan modifikasi *inventory parents and peer attachment*. Metode analisis data yang digunakan adalah regresi berganda. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa nilai $R=0,688$, $p<0,01$ yang berarti bahwa persepsi kelekatan ayah, ibu, dan teman sebaya secara signifikan memprediksi perilaku agresi pada remaja laki-laki.

Kata Kunci: persepsi kelekatan; perilaku agresi; remaja

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Introduction

The case of child abuse is an interesting topic to investigate because it has increased almost every year. Data record from the Indonesia Child Protection Commission, the number of child abuse cases in 2011 were 2178 cases. It increases to 3512 cases in 2012. In 2013, there were 4311 cases, and it increases to 5066 cases in 2014 (Setyawan, 2015). Observation made by KPAI in 2012 from 9 provinces found around 78.3 percent of children under 18 years old, were perpetrators of violence (Tim Liputan Kemempna, 2016). In September 2016, there was a fight between junior high school students in Ternate that ended up stabbing action made by his friend. The initial cause of the fight was a misunderstanding (Yamin, 2016).

The authors also found a similar phenomenon in Panti Sosial Marsudi Putra (PSMP) Antasena Magelang. Based on an interview with one of the residents there, GL (13 years old) on December 18th, 2016, states that there had been a fight between residents on Thursday, December 15th, 2016. The interviewee said that the fight occurred because of misunderstanding. Fortunately, the fight was found out by the institution officer so the victim, JF, immediately taken to the clinic and did not suffer any serious injuries. Based on an interview with the victim, JF confirmed that there had been fought and he became the wrong target victim.

The explanation above shows that child abuse cases are increasingly worrying. It is because violence cases committed by adolescent's cause injuries, even hospital treatment for the victims. The violence perpetrator must also be held accountable for their actions by following the judicial process, in which they are often being pressured by justice system. In addition, they also lose their opportunity to go to school because they are most likely expelled. Such event is contrary to Law No. 17 of 2007, which states that

adolescents are the nation's succession generation, so they are expected to be able build positive self-potential through formal and non-formal education (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, 2007). However, the fact is adolescents doing some actions that can reduce their qualities through acts of violence.

Violence is a form of aggressive behavior. A high level of aggressive behavior in adolescents does not suddenly appear, but it is preceded by aggressive behavior from childhood. Parents who ignore emotional and physical needs and tend to hurt their children, speak rudely, and threaten them, will trigger children's aggression. Children will feel unloved and tend to develop negative beliefs towards their parents and others such as hostile intentions (Ul-Morshed, Nirobe, & Naz, 2015).

Aggressive behavior is an act of hurting others (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2007). A similar statement is also proposed by Bukhori (2005) that aggressiveness is behavior aimed at human or inanimate objects which intend to harm and hurt both physically and psychologically. There are two motives for individuals doing aggression. First, an unpleasant event tends to be interpreted negatively and resulting anger called reactive aggression. Second, for achieving a certain goal or called proactive aggression, individual assumes that aggressive response is an appropriate response (Crick & Dodge, 1996). Although individual motives differ for aggressive behavior, form of behavior remains the same, namely open (physically and verbally) (Dodge et al., 2007). Physical aggression is an act of harming by doing physical actions, while verbal aggression is an act of harming by verbal expression (Eliani, Yuniardi, & Masturah, 2018).

Aggressive behavior in adolescents occurs due to failure and inability to process social information (Bukhori, 2008). Dodge (in Shaffer, 2009) explained that aggressive behavior in adolescent

through five stages in processing social information, namely receiving cues (encoding), interpretation of social information by seeing others having hostile intentions, seek and choose responses based on the scheme, and establish aggressive behavior as appropriate behaviors. According to this model, individuals choose solutions aggressively based on aggressive schemes obtained from their past experience, namely when children learn their first social interaction.

Family environment, especially parents have an important role in childhood development. Interaction occurs between children and parents will form an emotional bond called attachment. High level of attachment is characterized by adolescents feeling safe because both parents have high concern for them such as closeness, empathy, more affection, warm emotions, giving encouragement for their autonomy and independence, not behaving overprotective (Guarnieri, Ponti, & Franca, 2010). A high level of attachment is a reflection of positive interactions between children and parents. It accommodates children's emotional needs. When children's emotional needs are fulfilled, they will not experience emotional deficiency which can lead to negative behavior (Mortazavi, Sohrabi, & Hatami, 2012).

Attachment form from children's relationship with their first attached figure and it is mother. Initial experience to attached figures facilitates informing individual mental image and others, as referred to the internal working model. This mental model tends to be persistent and used as a behavior basis (Bowlby, 1969).

A low level of attachment is a reflection of negative interactions between parents and children. Negative interaction is such as exposure to violence perpetrated by parents against their children, both physically and verbally. Attachment experience facilitates forming a negative mental model that is used to predict and interpret others'

behavior (Collins & Read, 1990) and as behavior basis (Colin, 1996).

Based on Bowlby's attachment theory framework (in Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), there are three aspects of attachment, namely communication, trust, and alienation. The ability of attached figures who are responsive to adolescent needs when they feel depressed will build their trust in the attached figures. Attached figures' responsiveness performed by good communication makes adolescents not to feel strange (Laumi & Adiyanti, 2012).

Adolescents' attachment refers to not only aspects of parent-child relationships, but is also associated with adolescents' relationships with their peers. Closeness, togetherness, and openness to peers who reach their peak in adolescents, make relationships with their peers can be considered as type of attachment relationships (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Adolescents develop attachment relationships with their peers as emotional supporters (Nelis & Rae, 2009) so peers' refusal in adolescents makes them aggressive, antisocial, isolated, and unhappy (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009).

A high level of secure attachment to peers is when adolescents feel that peers are always there for them when it is needed (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005), made by friendship (Guarnieri et al., 2010). A high level of secure attachment to peers is associated with positive social competence, and low level of school regulation's violations (Gullone & Robinson, 2005). The existence of positive social competence tends to make children interpreting their friends because they tend to assume that their friend's negative behavior is temporary and can be forgiven (Trentacosta & Fine, 2010).

Based on previous research, a low level of attachment to peer's influences adolescents' aggressive behavior in cyberspace. Adolescent with low level of attachment to peers tends to

have low empathy so they tend to hurt their friends (Wright et al., 2015).

Based on the explanation above, this study examines if there is influence perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers to aggressive behavior in male adolescents. Aggressive behavior in adolescents is manifestation of attachment to parent. Low level of perception of attachment to parent, will form negative mental model towards themselves and others so adolescent will see themselves as worthless, and see others as negative and has hostile intentions (Simons, Paternite, & Shore, 2001). Because of negative mental model existence, adolescent will see their peers having hostile intentions so they tend to have low level of attachment qualities towards peers. Low quality of attachment to peers is associated with low level of empathy and caring so adolescents will tend to hurt their friends (Nikiforou, Georgiou, & Stavrinides, 2013).

The hypothesis of this study is that there is perception of attachment effect to father, mother, and peers to aggressive behavior in male adolescents. The lower perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers the higher aggressive behavior in male adolescents. Conversely, the higher perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers, the lower aggressive behavior in male adolescents.

Method

This study was descriptive quantitative research. Variables in this study consisted of one dependent variable namely aggressive behavior, and three independent variables namely perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers. Subjects were children from Panti Sosial Marsudi Putra (PSMP) Antasena Magelang, aged range 12-15 years old who were residents of PSMP Antasena Magelang. In this study, sampling

technique was using purposive sampling. The eligible subjects for this study were 31 children.

Perceived attachment was a perception of adolescents in interpreting emotional bonds that existed between them with their father, mother, and peers. This perception was based on adolescents' experience when they were interacting with their father, mother, and peers. Data collection was using perception of attachment scale to father, mother, and peers. Items on this scale were modification of inventory parent and peer attachment. Modification was made by removing multiple items that had same interpretation. The validity for perception of attachment scale to mother ranged from 0.302 to 0.718, perception of attachment scale to father ranged from 0.303 to 0.589, and perception of attachment scale to peers ranged from 0.352 to 0.644, while the reliability for perception of attachment scale to father was 0.814, perception of attachment scale to mother was 0.855, and perception of attachment scale to peers was 0.851.

Aggressive behavior was intended behavior to hurt others or damage other objects, done physically or verbally. Aggressive behavior measurement was using an aggressive behavior scale. The scale was arranged based on aggressive behavior types according to Dodge and Coei (Dodge et al., 2007). Validity for aggressive behavior scale ranged from 0.303 to 0.718 while reliability for aggressive behavior scale was 0.824.

Analysis in this study was using multivariate analysis to see the effect of independent variables, namely perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers with dependent variable, namely aggressive behavior. The statistical test was using multiple regression correlation and was done using SPSS 17.00.

Results

Subjects in this study were 31 children aged ranged from 12 to 15 years old who live in PSMP Antasena Magelang. PSMP Antasena was one of social rehabilitation institutions owned by state which was called *Lembaga Penyelenggara Kesejahteraan Sosial – Anak Bermasalah Hukum (LPKS-ABH)* (Abrori, 2016). Based on field data, background of parental status, there were 25 children who had complete parents, 5 children whose parents divorced, and 1 child whose father died. Based on their case, there were 19 children who were caught for theft cases, 8 children who were caught for molestation/rape cases, one child about against parent cases, and 3 children got into fight

The description of research variables was as in Table 1.

Based on Table 1, it was known that a hypothetical *mean* for perception of attachment to father and peers was higher than empirical *mean*. This showed low perception of attachment

to father and peers. Hypothetical *mean* of aggressive behavior and perception of attachment to mother was lower than empirical *mean*. This implied that perception of attachment to mother and adolescent’s aggressive behavior was high.

Hypothesis analysis in this study was as in Table 2.

Based on Table 2, $R = 0,688$ dan $sig < 0,05$, which implied that perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers had a significant effect on aggressive behavior. In table 2 it could be noted that $R^2 = 0,473$, which indicated that perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers making an effective contribution of 47,3%.

Discussion

The result from hypothesis analysis showed that perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers was predictor affecting aggressive behavior in male adolescents in PSMP Antasena Magelang. Based on descriptive analysis results, it

Table 1.
Description of research variable

	Mean		Standard Deviation	
	Empirical	Hyphothetical	Empirical	Hyphothetical
Aggressive Behavior	53,84	52,5	7,7	10,5
Perception of attachment to mother	66,90	57,5	9,3	11,5
Perception of attachment to father	57,42	57,5	8,7	11,5
Perception of attachment to peers	51,81	52,5	7,9	10,5

Tabel 2.
Hypothesis analysis

Model	R	R Square	Change Statistics			
			F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.688 ^a	.473	8.084	3	27	.001

was known that perception of attachment to mother was high while perception of attachment to father and peers was low. The result of this study supported previous studies that stated that attachment to parents and peers was predictor of disruptive behavior (bully). Attachment of adolescents predicted the way of adolescents viewing others and their tendencies on how they behave towards others (Nikiforou et al., 2013). Adolescents who perceived ensure attachment to father and mother tended to developmental models of themselves and others as negatively. This mental model facilitated negative self-attribution and others so they tended to have aggressive behavior (Simons et al., 2001).

Adolescence often referred to the storm and stress period. When entering early adolescence phase, there would be occurred emotional ups and down with more frequent intensity. This was caused by their hormonal changes. In overcoming emotional agitation, positive support from their close environment was important. Adolescents would reach emotional maturity in a conducive environment, having mutual trust, and respect. If adolescents were in an environment without getting parents' attention and also did not get peer recognition, it would cause emotional discomfort (Yusuf, 2010). Emotional discomfort caused adolescents to engage in negative behavior such as aggressive behavior (Sarwono, 2012).

The family environment was a factor influencing aggressive behavior. The relationship between children and parents marked by anger, hostility, and distrust would make children having negative view of themselves and others (Talebi & Verma, 2007). Parents' rejection by hurting children, talking sarcastically, and threatening caused children to feel unloved, anxious, and insecure. It would trigger them to behave in aggression (Ul-Morshed et al., 2015).

Aggressive behavior in adolescents occurred because of deficit and bias in processing social information. Adolescents tended to interpret social information as hostile intentions so they tended to choose aggressive problem-solving. According to this model, individuals chose problem solutions aggressively based on their aggressive schemes obtained from their past experiences, namely when children learn their first social interaction (Shaffer, 2009).

Family was placed where children got their first social interaction experience. In family environment, parent had duty to ensure that family functions were truly safe and comfortable. Interaction between parents and children that showed sensitivity and responsiveness repeatedly, would form sense of security in children. Their interaction would form an emotional bond between children and parents called attachment (Lestari, 2012).

Safe attachment in children was a reflection of positive interaction between children and parents. This would form positive mental model in children. Children would see themselves as valuable individuals and saw others as friendly people so it was easy for them to interact with others. Unsafe attachment was reflection of negative interaction at home. Negative interaction such as exposure to violence by parents both father and mother to children, caused children to form negative models (Talebi & Verma, 2007). Children with negative mental models had difficulty interacting with others. They felt anxious and uncomfortable while interacting with others. They were also always suspicious and found it hard to trust others. It would trigger aggressive behavior (Helmi, 1999).

Based on the result of this study, perception of attachment to mothers affected aggressive behavior in male adolescents. This result was similar to previous studies that adolescents' attachment to mothers was predictor of aggres-

sive behavior (Simons et al., 2001). Adolescents who had secure attachment to mother, would feel that mother provided support and sensitive to their verbal/nonverbal cues given by them, so they assumed that mother understanding them (J. P. Allen et al., 2003). Adolescents would be more open and trusting their mother so when mothers gave advice, they would follow their mother's saying (J. P. Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998). This would be their protector from negative emotions and aggressive behavior (J. P. Allen et al., 2003).

Based on the result of this study, perception of attachment to peers affected aggressive behavior in male adolescents. Result of this study were similar to previous studies that unsafe attachment to peers was associated with low level of sympathy towards peers and aggressive behavior. Adolescents with insecure attachment to peers tended to have unpleasant experiences during interaction that formed adolescents' negative mental model so they tended to interpret friends' behavior negatively and tended to hurt their friends (Laible, Carlo, & Raffaelli, 2000).

In this study, perception of attachment to father affected aggressive behavior in male adolescents. It was because children tended to identify their parents who had the same sex. Interaction of boys with their father in childhood influenced the way of thinking and behaving as man in adolescence and adulthood (Long, Fish, Scheffler, & Hanert, 2014). The role of father was associated with externalizing behavior (behavior disorder that had direct impact on others). Interaction between children and father were portrayed with father acting as challenging partner but calming. This would form children to be more tolerant of social problems and able to manage their emotions so they tended to solve problems in right way rather than using aggressive behavior (S. Allen & Daly, 2007).

The result of this study stated that perception of attachment to father, mother, and peer variable made an effective contribution of 47,3%. It showed that there were other factors predicting aggressive behavior in adolescents. Aggressive behavior in adolescent were influenced by media exposure to violence (Slater, Henry, Swaim, & Anderson, 2003), self-esteem (Shaheen & Jahan, 2014), family, school environment, community, neighbors, peers, and situational factors (Valois, MacDonald, Bretous, Fischer, & Drane, 2002). Situational factors included using weapons (Loeber & Hay, 2002), drugs and alcohol (Anderson & Bushman, 2002), and brain structures (Rolls, Hornak, Wade, & McGrath, 1994).

In this study, perception of attachment to father was 18,6%, perception of attachment to mother was 14,3%, and perception of attachment to peers was 19,0%. This showed that attachment to peers had the most influence on aggressive behavior. In adolescence, relationship with peers was important. Through peers, adolescents could tell about their personal experiences and interests because they assumed that peers could understand their feeling more than adults (Desmita, 2012). Adolescents' inability to build relationship with peers made them feeling lonely. Adolescents who was lonely had low level of assertiveness so irritation and anger could not be expressed positively. It would trigger aggressive behavior (Check, Perlman, & Malamuth, 1985).

Conclusion

Based on the study result, it could be concluded that the perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers was predictor of aggressive behavior in adolescents. The lower perception of attachment to father, mother, and peers, thus higher aggressive behavior in male adolescents. Conversely, the higher perception of

attachment to father, mother, and peers, thus lower aggressive behavior in male adolescents.

Suggestions

For parents, expected to be more optimal on raising children and teaching them moral values in accordance with community norms because parents are children's figures, so parents' words, actions, and attitudes will tend to be remembered and imitated by children. Positive interaction between children and their parents can form positive perception of attachment in children. It prevents children from aggressive behavior.

For Pantia Sosial Marsudi Putra Antasena Magelang, expected to create more conducive atmosphere such as having mutual trust between adolescents with their friends and parent. This

can be done by facilitating adolescents who is in PSMP Antasena for collaborative activities/games to increase mutual trust and provide consultation services for parent-related to how to nurturing and communicating with an adolescent who is PSMP Antasena. So, there will be harmonious relationship and protecting children from aggressive behavior.

For further researchers who interested in conducting research on the same topic, you can use other subjects such as parents. And in order to obtain more comprehensive and objective data, further researchers can use other methods such as mixed methods. In addition, it is necessary to examine other variables that cause aggressive behavior such as conformity and personality.[]

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