

# Stereotypes and Prejudices in Young Children

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## ABSTRACT

This research stems from the emergence of stereotyping behaviour tendencies and also prejudice in early childhood. The behaviour with stereotyping tendencies and prejudices in early childhood will have a complex consequence including violence. The purpose of this study is to analyse the symptoms of stereotyping behaviour and also prejudice in early childhood. This research was conducted through the application of a case study method by taking the subject of two early childhood with the age of 5 and 6 years who attend early childhood education (PAUD). The results of this study indicate that there are symptoms of stereotyping behaviour as well as prejudice in early childhood. The symptoms of stereotyping behaviour in early childhood can be seen from the behaviours that are on the social category's indicators such as ridiculing friends who have physical deficiencies, social identities such as looking down on friends because they feel they are the most beautiful/handsome, conformity such as wanting to win alone when doing activities, and attributions such as calling "stupid" to friends who are considered unable to do anything. The symptoms of suspicious behaviour include the following racial indicators such as seeing other ethnic groups as the source of the problem, gender indicators such as seeing a male or female friend as a threat, sex indicators such as seeing an unclothed friend like him is more despicable and political indicators such as does not like friends who wear clothes with certain attributes. Based on the research results, it appears that there are symptoms of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood.

**Keywords:** *Stereotype & prejudice behavior in early childhood.*

## 1. BACKGROUND

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the most basic level of education for children. This level of education is seen as the most valuable and decisive period for children's lives in the future. Fundamentally, early childhood education is oriented in developing character values, habituation and also basic and early abilities in the fields of reading, writing and arithmetic. To achieve these goals, the learning climate in PAUD is filled with fun activities, lots of play activities and also involves touch that involves the child's senses. This means that early childhood education must have a great emphasis on creating a happy atmosphere and avoiding activities that cause children to experience discomfort. Reber [1] conveyed that mistreatment of children will have an impact on learning disorders, psychologically even in certain cases resulting in the loss of valuable potential in children.

In fact, early childhood education encourages pleasure and comfort in learning, so that it avoids elements of violence and stereotyping behaviour and prejudice. However, in reality the symptoms of stereotypes and prejudice appear in early childhood learning. It seems that these behavioural symptoms are indisputable because in Indonesian culture the tendency

of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice tends to be commonplace. For example, in inter-ethnic and racial relations in Indonesia, there are many stereotypes and prejudices that tend to prevail until now and ironically tend to continue to grow and develop. Nicknames such as "Jawa kowek", "Batak supir angkot", "Padang bengkok", "Orang Tasikmalaya tukang kredit", "Cina licik". Indeed, there's also positive stereotypes and prejudices, such as, however, the negative ones are more numerous and usually tend to have ethnic, racial, religious and even sexual tendencies. In the past, even these negative stereotypes and prejudices were used as political tools to play against and divide the nation [2].

In the context of learning in schools, including early childhood education, stereotypes and prejudices that tend to develop are wrapped in ethnic forms in the form of cornering, discriminating and insulting certain ethnic groups. Ethnic-based stereotypes and prejudices in schools intersects with gender-based prejudices and violence such as harassing, insulting certain genders, discriminating based on groups of men and women and feeling stronger than certain groups. There are also forms of stereotypes and prejudice based on religion, such as only considering one's religion as a most noble religion and defaming the beliefs of other religions. Stereotypes and prejudice are also socially reflected,

such as insulting certain professions, considering certain professions to have a higher rank than other professions [3], [4], [5], [6].

The most obvious effect of stereotypes and prejudice is hatred. The most obvious fact in the world of education is oppression and bullying by seniors to juniors which has resulted in death in several schools, especially those labelled as official, student brawl and also violence in schools. Okezone campus on June 14, 2016 reported that from 2011 to 2015 there were 1880 acts of violence at schools, the one that get the most attention was the death of an eight-year-old elementary school student who was abused by his friend. The victim experienced severe brain haemorrhage which ended his life. Even in early childhood education, stereotypes and prejudice has existed clearly, especially in the form of violent behaviour both verbally, emotionally and physically [1].

The negative impact of stereotypes and prejudice on children's learning activities at school is real, solutions or alternatives are needed to deal with them. This study analyses the symptoms of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood.

**2. METHOD**

This research is a qualitative case study. The subjects of this study were a 5-year-old child and a 6-year-old child. The technique used to obtain data is to use observation techniques using instruments about stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood. Observation activities are carried out periodically for approximately 4 weeks.

Table 1. Areas of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood education

<b>Variable</b>	<b>behaviour Area</b>
Prejudice-based behaviour	Racial
	Gender
	Religion
	Sex
	Political
Stereotype-based Behaviour	Social category
	Social identity
	Conformity
	Attribution

**3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The following shows the tendency of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood in 2 children who were the research subjects.

**3.1. Stereotype-based and Prejudice-based Behaviours in Children**

a. Child A

Based on the results of observations, the tendency of stereotyping behaviour in child A can be seen from the following behaviours that look down on friends because they feel they are the most beautiful/handsome, underestimate their friends because they feel that they are the smartest, want to win alone when doing activities, do not want to share toys and say "stupid" to friends who are deemed unable to do anything.

The tendency of prejudicial behaviour in child A can be seen from the following behaviour, seeing that only men or women are the most powerful, consider friends who do not dress like him to be more despicable, Consider the religion that is believed to be the most perfect and Dislike of friends who wear clothes with certain attributes.

b. Child B

Based on the results of observations, the tendency of stereotyping behaviour in child B can be seen from the following behaviours that ridicule friends who have physical disabilities, underestimate friends because they feel they are the smartest, do not want to share toys, refuse to give food, and call "weepy" to friends who don't cry often.

The tendency of prejudicial behaviour in child B can be seen from the following behaviours, seeing other ethnic groups/groups as competitors, seeing other ethnic groups/groups as unfit for class, considering that their classmates, both boys and girls, are not worthy of achievement, see that only men or women are the greatest, and consider friends who do not dress like him to be more despicable.

Based on the results of the study, it appears that there are symptoms of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood. If not treated promptly, these behavioural symptoms will have a massive impact, especially on the possibility of violence. The number of acts of violence against children is increasing every year. This can be seen from the data reported by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI). It is found that from 2010 to 2014 there were 21.869.797 cases of violations of children's rights, spread across 34 provinces and 179 regencies and cities. As much as 42-58% of violations of children's rights constitute sexual crimes against children. The rest are cases of physical violence and child neglect. Data and victims of sexual crimes against children have increased every year. In 2010, there were 2.046 cases, of which 42% were sexual crimes. In 2011 there were 2.426 cases (58% sexual crimes), and 2012 there were 2.637 cases (62% sexual crimes). In 2013, there was a significant increase,

namely 3.339 cases, with sexual crimes accounting for 62%.

Stereotype and Prejudice behaviour are two terms that refer to tendentious behaviour towards a particular individual, group, race, culture, religion or gender. The concept of stereotypes was first introduced by a journalist Walter Lipmann in 1922 to describe the assessment of a person and group for a particular ethnicity [2], [7]. In the next process, stereotypes are no longer only concerned with ethnic entities, but begin to spread to wider areas such as culture, religion, gender and sex. In the context of education stereotypes tend to contain negative elements because the following factors (a) give a stigma to something that is still unclear, such as seeing a thin friend who is definitely not powerless, even though the facts are not necessarily as stigmatized; (b) as if certain characteristics apply to each individual in the cultural group. For example, the group of children who chose the language study field was more stupid than the group of children who chose the science subject; and (c) a "self-fulfilling prophecy" is formed because the impact has already been labelled as being stereotyped, for example a child who is often claimed to be lazy, then gradually he will brand himself as lazy [2], [4], [8].

Regardless of the form, stereotypes can have negative consequences if they are used as benchmarks in interpreting a behaviour. Also, A teacher should avoid stereotypes in interacting with students, especially if it is motivated by ethnic sentiments or certain groups. Conceptually there are various forms of stereotypes. The most common thing is stereotyping in the name of gender. This stereotype emphasizes irrational behaviour in groups of men and women. In the world of education, sometimes there is a stereotype that men are more appropriate to be class leaders than women. Women sometimes get a smaller portion. Like sweeping, mopping or cleaning dirty class furniture [8].

Stereotypes can be contagious because they become compositions or stories that are hereditary to refer to certain groups or ethnicities but the truth cannot be accounted for [9], [10]. All forms of stereotypes are not necessarily true, there are even stereotypes that are not true at all. Stereotypes quickly create negative perceptions in the area of the child's neuroscience, making it very difficult to turn the child's thinking back in the right direction.

In this case, Latifianazalati [8] provides an analysis of several factors that determine stereotype formation. The family, the different treatment of fathers and mothers towards boys and girls, indirectly have an impact on stereotyping. Peers, peers have a great influence on the stereotypes of children since preschool and become very important when children are in junior high school and high school. Peers encourage boys to play with men's games such as soccer, while girls play

with girls' games such as playing dolls. Schools, these official educational institutions provide a number of gender messages to children. Schools provide different treatment between them. Society influences the stereotypes of children through their attitude in seeing what has been provided for boys and girls to identify themselves. Women tend to need help and men are problem solvers. Mass media, through the appearance of men and women who are often seen in TV and newspaper advertisements. Not only is the frequency more male than female but also in the types of jobs that men are more and more prestigious than women.

Prejudice is hatred, suspicion and dislike that is irrational towards certain ethnic groups, races, religions or communities [2]. Furthermore, Nelson's opinion which states that prejudice is a negative evaluation of a person or group of individuals or other groups that are different from their own group [4]. Prejudice is a biased perception due to false or incomplete information and is based on some of the characteristics of other groups, both real and imagined. Cultural relations are areas that are very sensitive to the formation of prejudice and will be dangerous if the situation is continuously maintained [11]. The dangers of prejudice by presenting the results of their research which found the strong impact of these prejudices on neuronal systems in the brain, cognitive and emotional areas of a person, so that prejudice needs to be handled and minimized [12]. Prejudice that is maintained from an early age, especially in educational institutions, will stay much longer in a child's limbic system [13].

Setyawati [14], and Avianti [15] citing Johnson's opinion that prejudice is caused by four things, namely due to the description of the gap between groups, the tendency of cultural values owned by the majority to dominate minority groups forcibly, the strength of stereotypes between groups and groups that feel superior so that they feel other groups are inferior and helpless.

In educational activities, especially in early childhood education, of course, if these four cases are allowed to become a time bomb that is dangerous and perpetuates negative behaviour in the world of children's education. So, we need an adaptive learning model that is able to minimize the occurrence of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in children. The model is in the form of friendly school-based learning

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the research results, it is clear that there are symptoms of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in early childhood. If these behavioural symptoms are not anticipated, they will cause more complex problems, one of which is causing acts of violence. Efforts are

needed to prevent the spread of stereotyping behaviour and prejudice in children, either through counselling services or learning services that are fun and happy for children and are friendly and safe.

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