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## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN EXPERIENCING INSECURE ATTACHMENT WITH THEIR FATHERS**

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**Abstrak:** This research is motivated by problems with children's moral and spiritual behavior, such as disobeying parents' orders, being impolite, being lazy about going to school, and being negligent in religious matters. Based on this phenomenon, this study attempts to uncover the development of children's moral and spiritual behavior. To achieve this goal, this study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, documentation, and data reduction. Data validity was checked using source and data triangulation. The results of this study indicate that the development of moral behavior in children with insecure attachment to their fathers in Aik Are Hamlet, Ubung Village, Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency, identified children experiencing insecure attachment with an avoidant form. In this avoidant form, children will show an indifferent attitude, are reluctant to be with their attachment figure, and avoid their attachment figure without wanting to maintain contact with them. This occurs due to the lack of a secure attachment in parenting, especially from early childhood through late childhood or adolescence. The moral development of children experiencing insecure attachment to their fathers is at the preconventional level. Three subjects are at stage II and one is at stage I.

**Keywords:** Moral Behavior, Children, Insecure Attachment, Father

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini dilatar belakangi oleh masalah perilaku moral dan spiritual anak seperti melawan perintah orang tua, berlaku tidak sopan, malas sekolah, dan lalai dalam hal keagamaan. Berangkat dari fenomena tersebut, penelitian ini mencoba mengungkap tentang perkembangan perilaku moral dan spiritual anak. Untuk mencapai tujuan di atas, dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi dan teknik analisis data yaitu reduksi data. Sedangkan dalam mengecek keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan triangulasi data. Adapun hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan perilaku moral pada anak dengan insecure attachment dengan ayah di Dusun Aik Are Desa Ubung Kecamatan Jonggat Kabupaten Lombok Tengah diidentifikasi bahwa anak-anak yang mengalami insecure attachment dengan bentuk avoidant. Dalam bentuk avoidant ini anak akan menunjukkan sikap acuh, enggan bersama figur lekatnya, dan menghindari figur lekatnya tanpa mau mempertahankan kontak dengannya. Hal tersebut terjadi akibat tidak adanya kelekatan yang aman dalam pengasuhan anak terutama pada masa kanak-kanak awal hingga usia kanak-kanak akhir atau menginjak usia remaja. Adapun perkembangan perilaku moral anak yang mengalami insecure attachment dengan ayahnya berada

pada tingkat prakonvensional. Dimana 3 orang subjek berada pada pada tahap II dan 1 subjek lainnya berada pada tahap I.

**Kata Kunci:** Perilaku Moral, Anak, Insecure Attachment, Ayah

## INTRODUCTION

Today, children's behavior can be said to be very worrying for parents and their surroundings. Some of these behaviors include defying parents, being disrespectful, neglecting religious matters, and being lazy about school. These issues often become hot topics in society, leading to questions about their family backgrounds. A closer look reveals that these issues reflect a worrying future for the nation's children.

In response to this, the negative behaviors that frequently emerge in children require special attention. Therefore, as a form of attention, it is necessary to first understand the child's own condition, such as their relationship with their environment, parents, and family, as the smallest unit in society that has the responsibility to support optimal child growth and development. The presence of parents is a very integral part of the educational process, with the goal of equipping children to solve the problems they face, whether personal, group, or school, so that they develop a person with noble morals, in line with their aspirations, namely devotion to parents, religion, nation, and state.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially, the relationship between a child and their parents is a source of emotional and cognitive development for them. This relationship provides opportunities for children to explore their environment and social life. In fact, early relationships can serve as models for later relationships. This early relationship begins from birth, even while the fetus is still in the womb. The role of parents influences the child's behavior during subsequent growth and development, including the formation of the child's behavior. Various parenting attitudes, seen in how parents respond to and meet needs, form an

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<sup>1</sup> Ani Siti Anisah dkk, "Perkembangan Sosial, Emosi, Moral Anak, Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pembentukan Sikap Sosial Siswa Sekolah Dasar", *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, (Vol.1 No.1 Thn.2021), Hlm.75  
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emotional bond between the child and their parent as a caregiving figure. According to Bowlby, the emotional bond formed between a child and their parent as a caregiving figure is called attachment.<sup>2</sup>

Bowlby, in Suci Lia Sari, states that attachment is a relationship between certain social figures and a particular phenomenon considered to reflect unique relationship characteristics. Attachment, formed during infancy, has a significant influence on developmental stages.<sup>3</sup> Attachment is divided into two types: secure attachment and insecure attachment. Secure attachment is a state where there are no problems with the caregiver's attention and availability. Insecure attachment, on the other hand, is the absence of consistent availability and comfort from the caregiver when a threat is perceived. This is due to a parent-child attachment that is not going well or is insecure attachment tends to cause various problems during a child's development.

During a child's development, various aspects are involved, including moral and spiritual aspects. Morals are the character or values inherent in a person or individual. Morals are inherent in every individual, as they are inherent in human capacity.<sup>4</sup> Spirituality itself is an essential part of a person's overall health and well-being. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term "spirit" means spirit, soul, and joy, while "psyche" relates to the psyche and is related to spirituality.<sup>5</sup>

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers in Aik Are Hamlet, Ubung Village, Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency, they discovered several children exhibiting poor moral and spiritual behavior, such as being disrespectful, defying their parents, being lazy about school, and neglecting prayer. Based on these problems, researchers attempted to identify

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<sup>2</sup> Suci Lia Sari dkk, "Kelekatan Orangtua Untuk Pembentukan Karakter Anak ", *Jurnal Educations Guidance And Counseling Development*, Vol. 1 No. 1 Thn. 2018, hlm.2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Ni Komang Rani Pradnyani, "Pendapat Tentang Moral Di Zaman Now", *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial*, Vol. 1 No. 2 Thn. 2015, hlm.55.

<sup>5</sup> Sugeng Sejati, "Perkembangan Spiritual Remaja Dalam Perspektif Ahli", *Jurnal Hawa*, Vol. 1 No. 1, Thn. 2019, hlm.95.

the underlying factors behind these children's behavior. In this case, they perceived that the problem was related to the children's insecure attachment to their parents. Therefore, the researchers chose the title "Development of Moral Behavior in Children Experiencing Insecure Attachment to Their Fathers (Case Study in Aik Are Hamlet, Ubung Village, Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency)" to address the underlying factors behind this phenomenon.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at exploring social and psychological phenomena related to family dynamics, inclusive education, and gender mainstreaming. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving relevant subjects such as students, parents, volunteers, and community leaders. This approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of meanings, experiences, and dynamics that cannot be captured quantitatively, while providing contextual interpretation of the issues under study.

Data analysis was conducted using reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation techniques, enabling the findings to be connected with the theoretical framework applied. The validity of the data was ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as expert consultation to maintain consistency of interpretation. In this way, the research results not only describe empirical conditions but also contribute theoretically to the development of gender and inclusive education studies.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes research ethics, including maintaining participant confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and ensuring that the research process does not cause harm to those involved. These principles are essential to uphold academic integrity and to guarantee the social relevance of the research outcomes.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to determine the development of moral behavior in children by interviewing various sources. Based on the results of direct interviews with several related sources, namely:

Mother (Uni) said,

*"My child usually fights with his playmates at home. He is often teased because his father is far away. His friends say that his father doesn't love him. When I explain why his father has gone to work far away, he refuses to accept the reason and sometimes yells at me. At times like that, I usually give him money to calm him down. I sometimes get called by his teachers at school because he often fights. When asked why he fights, he always says that his friends often make fun of him. Once, my child said that if his father were here, he would ask him to shut up his friends who were making fun of him."*

MH said,

*"My mother often scolds me when I fight with my friend. I sometimes feel angry with my mother because she scolds me, even though I'm not wrong and my friend was the one who started teasing me. I get upset and hit her. My friends say that my father doesn't love me, that's why he left me for a faraway place. Because of what they say, I get upset, but people also blame me for hitting my friend."*

Based on interviews with Mrs. Uni, the subject's parent, researchers observed that the child (MH) responded to his friends' teasing by fighting. MH was unable to control his emotions. When his friends said that his father didn't love him because he was always abroad as a migrant worker, MH often had problems with his friends because of this. He said that he fought with his friends because he was annoyed at being teased. So, he retaliated by hitting his friends or even using other harsh words.

The results of the interview with Subject A and Mr. Burhan are as follows:

*"My child refuses to obey me. Since I returned home as a migrant worker abroad, he has rarely communicated with me. I also often receive bad news about my child, who reportedly often uses rude language while playing with his friends. When asked, my child always says no, perhaps he's afraid I'll punish him. Furthermore, my neighbor said that if his friends don't obey him, he doesn't hesitate to hit and even fight with them. Since he was little, I've rarely paid attention to my child because I've been busy working. When I first heard about my child's behavior from several people, I was shocked."*

From the interview with Mr. Burhan, or subject A's parent, the child refused to interact with his father. He preferred playing with his friends rather than interacting intensively with his father.

#### Subject A

*"My mother sometimes scolds me when I'm naughty, and sometimes she also punishes me for it. I often play during class, and my teacher reports it to my mother. My father is never home, so yesterday, when he came home, I didn't want to play with him. Sometimes I'm afraid of getting scolded if my father finds out I've fought with my friends. When we fight, I usually stay home and go to my grandmother's house to avoid getting scolded. I also rarely play with my friends close to home because they often tease me. Sometimes people also tell my mother and father when I have problems with my playmates. But I fight because they don't listen to me. Sometimes I tell them to do this, but my friends don't listen, so I get annoyed and hit them."*

From interviews with Mr. Burhan, subject A's parent, he often received reports that his child was often naughty when playing, especially with children in the neighborhood. While playing, the subject often fought and sometimes ordered his friends to do things according to his wishes. Subject A also said that after fighting with friends, he was afraid to go home because neighbors often reported him. He didn't dare go home for fear that his father would scold him.

Then there are also the results of interviews with the parents of the subject (MA), namely Mrs. Ami, and also with the subject MA.

The following are the results of the interview:

#### Mrs. Ami:

*"I often scold my child because he often neglects his prayers. Sometimes he also refuses to go to Quranic study school. Even though I've been enrolling my child in a Quran study group near our house since he was little, my husband remains silent and gives him money. He says he does this because he feels sorry for my child because he's often scolded and rarely spent time with him when he was little. He wants his child to have whatever he wants, even though he should be more concerned with his religious obligations, as he's already 13 years old. My husband prioritizes our child's enjoyment of money over his behavior. But when my husband does this, I remain silent, afraid that if I get angry, we'll fight."*

#### MA Subject

*"My mother scolded me when I didn't want to go to Quran study and sometimes didn't want to go to school. I felt lazy when I went to school because there were so many lessons. I felt bored at school, so I often didn't go to school. Usually, I left home wearing my school uniform, but I didn't go to school. I went to the social work center, and then I came home after school. But once a neighbor reported me to my mother, and she scolded me. From then*

*on, I was forced to go to school, but I often skipped school. My father didn't care about it; he even defended me when my mother was angry. I overheard their conversations on the phone. Sometimes I didn't care what other people said. I would do what I liked, even if people said I was a bad kid. If I was naughty, what would they do to me? When I got into fights at school. Even, many people said that I was a naughty child."*

Based on interviews with Ami's mother, the subject's parent, the researcher observed that she displayed an indifference to her parents' orders to perform religious duties. Furthermore, her close friend (her father) ignored this. Furthermore, the subject stated that she rarely attended school, preferring to play on the video game. She also reported frequently fighting with her friends at school. Observations of her social environment revealed that she often rebelled when instructed by her parents. Furthermore, she sometimes yelled at her mother when warned not to spend too much time playing with her gadgets.

Below are the results of an interview with Mrs. Murni, the parent of subject R, and subject R:

Mrs. Murni

*"When asked to buy something for his younger sibling, my son often refuses. He instead plays with his friends. He also often yells at his younger sibling when he cries or whines. Sometimes he pinches him, making him cry. When I scold him, my son yells back at me. However, when he's in front of other people, he's usually quiet and sometimes quickly complies with my wishes. However, after those people leave, he'll return to his angry, unexplained behavior toward me or his younger sibling. When I tell my husband about my son's rebellious behavior, he says, "Just leave him alone." He's still a child, but he's never experienced the thrill of raising a child because he's rarely with us."*

Subject R

*"My mother often sends me to the shop to buy something. When I refuse, she often scolds me. But in front of others, I don't dare refuse my mother's orders; I obey her. If I refuse in front of others, I'll definitely be called a naughty child. Because I used to yell at my mother and my aunt, who said I was naughty. Not only did my aunt call me naughty, but so did my cousins. They told me I had to obey them. But if I didn't, what would they do to me? Besides, if they told me to do things too often, I wouldn't be able to play with my friends."*

Based on interviews with subject R's parents, researchers observed that he frequently acted rudely toward his younger sibling. He also didn't hesitate to yell at his mother when warned. He reasoned that he didn't want to be told

to do things because it would prevent him from playing with his friends. However, when in front of others, he pretended to comply with his mother's orders. He explained that he complied so that others wouldn't label him naughty.

### **An Analysis of Spiritual Moral Development in Children with Insecure Parental Attachment**

According to Christina Hari Soetjningsih, early childhood moral reasoning is at level I, or preconventional, while later childhood is at level II, or conventional. At this level, individuals apply certain standards, These standards are set by others, such as parents. Moral development in late childhood includes, firstly, that children will do good deeds not for physical gratification, but rather for psychological gratification gained through social approval. Secondly, because the environment is broader, moral principles are largely determined by group norms. Thirdly, children around the age of 10-12 are familiar with the concept of morality (such as honesty, justice, and respect). Finally, good or bad actions are determined by the motivation behind them.<sup>6</sup>

Then there is also the aspect of moral development, which, according to Lawrence Kohlberg in Laila Maharani, is divided into three levels, each with its own stages. The following are the levels of moral development:

The first level is Preconventional. At this level, rules contain moral principles established by authority. Children do not violate moral rules because they fear threats and punishment from authority. This level is divided into two stages: (1) The first stage is the obedience and punishment orientation stage. At this stage, children only understand that these rules are determined by an inviolable authority. Children must obey or face punishment. (2) The second stage is relativistic hedonism. Here, children are no longer absolutely dependent on external rules determined by others who have authority. Children begin to realize that every event has several aspects that depend on needs and pleasure.

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<sup>6</sup> Christina Hari Soetjningsih, *Perkembangan Anak*, (Jakarta : Prenamedia Group, 2012), Hlm.287.  
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Then the second level is Conventional. In level this consists of 2 stages: (1) orientation stage regarding the child good. At this stage, children begin to demonstrate an orientation toward actions that can be considered good by others. Something is considered good and correct if its attitudes and behavior are accepted by the community. (2) The second stage is maintaining social norms and authority. At this stage, children demonstrate good and correct behavior not only to be accepted by the community but also to maintain existing social rules and norms as a moral obligation and responsibility to implement existing rules.<sup>7</sup>

Laila Maharani's explanation of three levels of moral development, however, in this study, the researchers analyzed that children's moral development from early childhood to late childhood falls into levels I and II, namely, preconventional and conventional. Considering the age of the children studied, aged 8 to 13, their moral development falls into levels I and II.

Interviews with subject MH and his parents revealed that he is at the preconventional level of moral development. At this stage, he is in stage II, the relativistic hedonism stage. At this stage, children are no longer absolutely dependent on external rules. They will do what they need and what makes them happy. He also does this to counter the teasing of his friends. By doing so, he believes he has given appropriate retribution to his friends.

Furthermore, the subject also stated that he didn't care about what others said about him being naughty, etc., because he believed what he was doing was right and that he felt satisfied doing it.

Based on interviews with Subject A and his parents, data showed that he was at the preconventional level of moral development. At this level, he was at stage II, the relativistic hedonism stage. He frequently violated school rules, such as skipping school and fighting with friends. Teachers often reported him to his parents because he was having problems at school. The subject stated that he fought with his friends because they didn't want to get

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<sup>7</sup> Laila Maharani, "Perkembangan Moral Pada Anak", *Jurnal Konseli*, Vol.1 No.2. Thn.2014, hlm.95.

his way. He often ordered his friends around, and when they didn't, he became upset, and fights ensued.

Not only did he cause trouble with his friends, but he also frequently yelled at his mother because he felt she too often ordered him to do things he didn't like. When he caused trouble, he was also afraid his father would find out.

Therefore, he was afraid his father would find out and he would be scolded.

The third subject, MA, is also at the first level of moral development, namely preconventional.

At this level, the subject is in stage II, the stage of relativistic hedonism. This stage is where the subject is no longer absolutely dependent on external rules set by others. The subject acts according to what he needs and what makes him happy.

The moral behavior demonstrated by the subject himself was often fighting with his friends at school. This was done to protect and defend himself when friends teased or contradicted him. Even when adults around him called him a bad kid, the subject ignored it. The subject stated that he acted according to what he believed was right and didn't care if it would result in others calling him naughty. The subject was relaxed about what others said about him, even though people often called him a naughty and rebellious child.

Furthermore, interviews with subject R and his parents revealed that he is at the preconventional level of moral development. At this level, he is in Stage I, the stage of obedience and punishment. At this stage, he only understands that rules are determined by authority and that he must obey. Previous interviews with his parents and the subject revealed that he often yells at his younger sibling when his mother tells him to do something. However, he has yelled at his mother several times, and his neighbors have called him a naughty child. Since these repeated incidents, he has begun to obey his mother in front of others.

The subject began to obey only in front of others, saying he did this so he wouldn't be called a naughty child anymore. He even said rude things to his close friends several times, and was told they would report him to his parents. He was afraid his father would scold him if he found out about his frequent misbehavior.

From the behavior they exhibit, it can be analyzed that the subjects' motivation lies in their pre-conventional moral development stage. By behaving inappropriately, these children receive more attention from their mothers, although they are still reluctant to express it in a positive manner. The children's behavior is also sometimes spontaneous because they don't know how to respond to their situation. This is in line with Laila Maharani's opinion that moral attitudes and behavior are not solely the result of socialization or lessons learned from cultural values. They also occur as a result of spontaneous activities learned and developed through children's social interactions with their environment.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, from observations, researchers found that children who have insecure attachments to their fathers tend to exhibit behavior that deviates from societal moral norms. These children often engage in delinquent behavior, including contradicting adults when reminded, disrespecting their parents by yelling, and frequently speaking rudely while playing with their friends.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observation and interview data analyzed in this thesis and referring to the problem formulation, the following conclusions can be drawn: The four research subjects experienced an avoidant form of insecure attachment to their fathers. All four children showed apathy when meeting and interacting directly with their fathers. Furthermore, the subjects also tried to avoid direct interaction with their father figures. They tended to maintain interactions with their mothers. This occurred because the father figure did

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

not participate directly and consistently in the child's development. They had limited time to interact directly with their children due to work commitments. Furthermore, the father figure did not pay much attention to the child, causing the child to become indifferent when with the father figure.

Based on the development of moral behavior in children experiencing insecure attachment to their fathers, it can be concluded that three of the four subjects are in preconventional moral development stage II, namely the relativistic hedonism stage. At this stage, children are no longer absolutely dependent on external rules. Furthermore, one subject is also in the preconventional stage, but the difference is that this subject is in stage I, namely the stage of orientation toward obedience and punishment.

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