

Perception of Parents Working as Plastic Waste Sorter on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) of Young Children

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Abstract. Perception of Parents Working as Plastic Waste Sorter on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) of Young Children. Several studies have been conducted regarding the perception of parents having young children on clean and healthy living behavior (*Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat* –PHBS) but have not included vulnerable groups, such as parents working as plastic waste sorter. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out how parents whose job is plastic waste sorter and who have young children perceive clean and healthy behaviour. It was qualitative research taking place in Pati, Central Java involving 3 parents. The researcher used in-depth interviews supported with observation to collect the data. The six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used in analyzing the data. Findings showed that parents' perception on clean and healthy living behavior was still limited to bathing and washing hands. This had an impact on children's understanding as well. Sources of information were only from television and religious leaders. Inadequate PHBS infrastructure in the workplace also became a barrier. The village leaders can collaborate with community health centers and religious figures to provide counseling regarding clean and healthy living behavior to vulnerable groups such as parents who work as plastic waste sorters and have early childhood children.

Keywords: clean and healthy living behaviour (PHBS), early childhood education children, parents, perception

Abstrak. Persepsi Orangtua Pemilah Sampah Plastik Terhadap Perilaku Hidup Bersih Dan Sehat (PHBS) Pada Anak Usia Dini. Beberapa penelitian telah dilakukan terkait persepsi orangtua yang memiliki anak usia dini terhadap PHBS namun tidak melibatkan mereka yang bekerja di tempat rentan penyakit, misalnya yang berprofesi sebagai pemilah sampah plastik. Sehingga, penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui bagaimana persepsi orangtua pemilah sampah plastik terhadap PHBS pada anak usia dini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif di wilayah Pati, Jawa Tengah. Subyek penelitian adalah 3 orangtua. Peneliti menggunakan *in-depth interview* didukung observasi. Enam fase analisis Braun dan Clarke digunakan untuk analisis data. Berdasarkan penelitian, persepsi PHBS orangtua terbatas sekedar mandi dan mencuci tangan yang berdampak terbatasnya pemahaman PHBS anak. Sumber informasi terkait PHBS hanya dari televisi dan pemuka agama. Sarana prasarana PHBS yang kurang layak di tempat kerja juga menjadi hambatan. Pihak desa bisa bekerja sama dengan layanan kesehatan desa dan pemuka agama untuk memberikan penyuluhan terkait PHBS pada kelompok rentan seperti orangtua anak usia dini yang berprofesi sebagai pemilah sampah plastik.

Kata Kunci: anak usia dini, Hidup Bersih dan Sehat (PHBS), persepsi

INTRODUCTION

Clean and healthy living behavior, later abbreviated as PHBS (*Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat*), is one of those substances to which children should be introduced since their early age (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022). Introducing and habituating PHBS at early age are considered crucial as preventive actions from diseases. Some diseases can be avoided by implementing PHBS, such as diarrhea. Referring to Basic Health Research, the percentage of children aged under five years old suffering from diarrhea in 2018 was 12.3 % (Ministry of Health, 2018). There was a 6.2% fall compared to that result of Basic Health Research in 2013 which reached 18.5% (Ministry of Health, 2018). Despite the falling number, 12.3% is believed to belong to a high rate considering that diarrhea becomes the second prominent cause of young children mortality in Indonesia (Utami, 2018).

Widiyanto and Gamelia (2017) affirm that young children are potentially prone to diseases as they have low immunity if they are not familiarized with PHBS. PHBS serves as an effort to prevent diarrhea. There is a correlation between PHBS, such washing hands before eating and after defecating and processing food hygienically and healthily, and diarrhea on young children. Moreover, in this pandemic era, washing hands using soap also functions as a preventive action from spreading COVID-19 virus. Grounding from those reasons, it is fundamental to teach PHBS towards young children.

Despite the above verity, many early childhood education institutions now conduct limited face-to-face learning process by reducing the learning hours due to COVID-19 pandemic. Some other schools carry out online classes. It means that teachers' opportunities to teach PHBS to children are restricted. On the other hand, parents' role in assisting children's learning including learning PHBS becomes very urgent.

Children are the nation's assets as the representation and determinant of Indonesia's future. Children also have the potential opportunity to become agents of change in promoting PHBS since early age at school, family, and community environment (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). Unfortunately, it can only happen when children receive enough support from their surrounding (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). One of the most affecting factors is family or parents. Parents play a significant role in introducing PHBS to children since early age as parents are the main and first educators for children as mentioned by Syahreni quoted by Anhusadar and Islamiyah (2020).

The PHBS implementation of young children in family environment is influenced by parents' knowledge and attitude. Some studies investigating parents' perception on PHBS in young children have been conducted like that completed by Astuti and Suwardi (2021) as well as studies tackling PHBS implementation like that done by Anhusadar and Islamiyah (2020). However, those studies do not involve parents who work in susceptible-to-disease sectors such as waste sorters. On the other hand, young children from this family belong to vulnerable groups which need more attention regarding PHBS. Therefore, this research is necessary to fill in the gap which is to figure out the perception of parents working as plastic waste sorters on PHBS of young children in order to find out what kind of action that might be can be done to support those family and children in implementing PHBS.

METHOD

This is a field study where researchers collect data by doing interview and observation towards the research subjects. Descriptive qualitative approach is applied to answer the research question on perception of parents working as plastic waste sorters on PHBS in young children.

This study was conducted in village X in Pati region, Central Java. The village is one of waste sorting centers. There were about 8 houses functioning as the centers of waste sorting process. The researcher uses pseudonym for the village as well as for the research subjects according to the ethics of research to keep their identities confidential. The research was completed in October-November 2021 after the researcher obtained approval from the Institution of Research and Community Services from the researcher's workplace.

The subjects of this research were parents working as plastic waste sorters and having young children. Young children here referred to children aged 0-8 years old. The definition of early childhood education according to the Constitution of National Education System number 20 year 2003 article 1 verse 14" early childhood education is an instruction targeting newborn up to six years old conducted by providing education stimulation to encourage physical and spiritual growth and development to prepare children for further education" (Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, No.20, 2003). As the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), an association of early childhood education located in the United States, defines early childhood children as those aged 0-8 years old, this study involves the respective children.

Three research subjects participating in this study were mothers. The place for the plastic waste sorting located in Pati, Central Java was dominated by female employees. Mothers also hold a role in educating their children, including teaching them about PHBS, so that the research subjects were held relevant with this research goal.

One parent (Participant X) had a 4-year-old child and had been a waste sorter for 3 years. 1 participant (Participant Y) had an 8-year-old kid and had been working as a waste sorter for 2 years. The last participant (Participant Z) was a mother of 2 children aged 2 years old and 8 years old and had been a waste sorter for one year. Two participants, X and Z, worked in the same place while Y worked in a different waste sorting center. All participants came from low economy class and had limited education qualification which were either primary school graduate or primary school dropout. The summary of the research subjects' identities can be seen in the following table 1.

Table 1. Research Subjects

Research subject	Children's age	Working experience	Workplace
Participant X	4 years old	3 years	House A
Participant Y	8 years old	2 years	House B
Participant Z	2 years old and 8 years old	2 years	House A

The researcher employed in-depth interview as the primary data collection technique supported with documents in the form of pictures and notes during the observation. The research subjects decided the time of the interview and how the interview was done. When necessary, the researcher would use local language in the interview, which was Javanese, to give more freedom and comfort for the participants to respond to the questions with no language barrier. The interview lasted for 15-20 minutes. Prior to it, the researcher asked for permission from the research subjects to record the interview process. The researcher also convinced them that their identities remained confidential. Pseudonyms are applied using letters to identify the subjects' identities.

The in-depth interview was carried out in a semi-structured way by giving open questions to the research subjects. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) state that in a semi-

structured interview, researchers prepare some questions as a guide yet are open to modifications such as follow-up questions.

Six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) are applied. The first phase is familiarizing oneself with the data done by writing the interview transcript. The transcript will be read several times until researchers get familiar with the data. The second phase is generating initial codes to the existing data. The third phase is looking for themes. In this phase, label selection and sorting are done to make them as the themes of the research findings with the supporting data. In the fourth phase, researchers review the themes. Researchers make sure that the selected themes are adequately supported by data, and they see whether there is similarity among themes. In phase five, researchers define and label the themes with relevant names representing the research findings. The last phase is writing the report to answer the problem verified by data from interview, observation logs, and literature. The six phases of thematic analysis are done sustainably (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this research, there are three chosen themes based on the interview and observation. Those three themes are parents' perception on PHBS, parents' source of information about PHBS, and limited PHBS infrastructure.

Data trustworthiness was achieved through triangulation. The researcher cross-examined the data from interview and observation.

FINDINGS

Parents' Perception on PHBS

Referring to Indonesia Dictionary, perception has two different definitions. First, perception is defined as a direct response (acceptance) towards something. The second definition of perception is a process which people undergo to acknowledge things through their senses (Indonesia Dictionary, 2021). Suwardi and Astuti mention "perception is the process of stimulant entrance through senses which then being sorted, interpreted, analyzed, and integrated, and afterwards it goes to the brain which causes thinking process, triggers understanding, and is concluded as a message and information" (Astuti & Suwardi, 2021). From the definition, the conclusion is that perception is obtained from various information which is piled up after people see, hear, or feel based on their experience in their surrounding environment.

Based on this research, the participants' perception on clean and healthy living behavior was identical with eating nutritious food, washing hands using soap, and taking shower. Hygiene is the prerequisite of healthy life (Astuti & Suwardi, 2021) like what was stated by participants in the following interview transcript.

"Healthy life means eating nutritious food. Clean life means washing hands."

(Participant Y)

"Healthy means that we wash the food first before cooking it. Washing hands before eating" (Participant Z)

"Taking shower after working because we smell like trash. Moreover, when we will pray, we have to be clean" (Participant X)

Parents' Information Sources about PHBS

People's perception emerges as a collection of what they see, and hear, or is obtained from various stimulants in the environment where an individual lives. Participants' perception on PHBS was achieved from watching television advertisement related to the ongoing pandemic, listening to religious figures who advise them to wash hands as a preventive action in COVID-19 virus spread, and from what they learned at school back then though it was only at primary school level.

"We know about washing hands from watching TV. Our religious leaders also told us to wash hands using soap to prevent virus from spreading" (Participant Y)

"We know clean behavior. Washing hands. We see every day on TV." (Participant X)

"We know from school and from our own experiences" (Participant Z)

Limited PHBS Infrastructure

Information understanding and access related to PHBS were not the only challenges for parents who worked as plastic waste sorters. Albeit participants' understanding on the significance of washing hands as a part of clean and healthy living behavior, its practice becomes a challenge as it has not become a habit yet. Another challenge is the absence of washing hand facilities such as soap in the workplace.

"Sometimes we forget to wash our hands. We eat directly. Sometimes we remember. In the workplace, there is a tap and sunlight (a brand of dishes soap)" (Participant Y)

"We know that washing hands should use soap, but we don't have it in the workplace. There is only a tap. Soap is not provided." (Participant Z)

"There is no soap. So, sometimes we ask for it to the waste sorting house, or we wrap our hands before taking some food" (Participant X)

The habituation of clean and healthy living behavior is impossible without sanitation infrastructure availability. Referring to Indonesia Dictionary, sanitation is defined as an effort to develop and create a good condition in health field, especially the community health. In the guide book entitled Guidance to Clean and Healthy Living Behavior, there are three components of sanitation called facility, clean behavior, and sanitation management (Ministry of Health, 2011).

In this research context, the absence of soap in the workplace as one of facilities in washing hands can be an obstacle in habituating clean and healthy behavior. This behavior will later become a habit for parents and children at home as well. For example, if parents are not accustomed to use soap for washing hands, children might do the same because parents as the role models do not do that.

"Sometimes I forget to remind my kid to wash hands. You haven't washed your hands, Abel? (Name is pseudonym)" (Participant Y)

However, parents do not have the courage to remind the employer to provide soap for washing hands.

"I bring my own mask and gloves, but soap is not available. I am afraid to let the boss know" (Participant Z)

DISCUSSION

Based on the above findings, regrettably, PHBS perception is perceived by participants as merely washing hands and taking shower. Astuti and Suwardi (2021) state that PHBS is not limited to those two activities; it includes other behaviors like how we litter. This notion is supported by Directorate of Early Childhood Development who explains that there are many examples of clean and healthy living behavior that can be taught to children. Some of those aspects cover urinating (*buang air kecil* – BAK) and defecation (*buang air besar* – BAB) behavior, habituation of washing hands using soap (*cuci tangan pakai sabun* – CTPS), habituation to eat healthy and clean food, and habituation to not litter and keep the environment clean and safe (Directorate of Early Childhood Development, 2020).

Theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky elucidates the existence of distance between the real development stage and potential

development stage with the assistance from adults or more capable peers (Cahyono, 2010). According to the theory, children can exceed their actual capability when facilitated by teachers, parents, or more competent peers. Within home context, Zone of Proximal Development will not occur if parents do not possess higher competence, for example, their understanding on PHBS. Therefore, parents' limited understanding on PHBS will affect early childhood children. Children will achieve limited understanding on PHBS as well because parents serve as one of information sources for children especially during this pandemic era where schools conduct online or restricted face-to-face meetings with reduced learning hours.

Fascinatingly, based on the interview transcript above, religious factor plays a role in shaping parents' perception on clean and healthy living behavior. Nashriyah (2021) affirms that someone's faith or religion is one of driving factors affecting someone's behavior. This applies to PHBS, too. As a muslim, parents implement PHBS as hygiene is a part of Islamic teaching and is an obligation to do before doing religious rituals like praying (*salat*). Hygiene is indeed an aspect highlighted and valued in Islam (Arifin et al., 2022). It is often stated in the Holy Al Quran as well as hadiths, such as washing hands, covering food, ablution (*wudhu*) before praying (Fitriah, 2016). Even there is a very popular term regarding hygiene in Islam to highlight how important hygiene which is 'cleanliness is half of faith'

Islamic teaching which emphasizes hygiene becomes parents' motivation to clean themselves after working in waste sorting place. Parents' faith as a muslim is seen from how their perception on PHBS is shaped. This agrees with a statement from Astuti and Suwardi (2021) who mention that individual perception is affected by what he sees, hears, and feels "and is deduction from various stimulants where he lives" (p.11). Environmental stimulants may come in the form of the religion that the participants and the community members hold, which is Islam in this case.

The findings also show that only washing hands using soap is identical with clean and healthy living behavior. The perception possibly emerges as an impact of frequent TV advertisements and advice to wash hands using soap during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This notion goes along with the definition of perception discussed earlier stating that perception is "the process of stimulant entrance through sense organs, which is then sorted, interpreted, analyzed, and integrated which then enters the brain, so that thinking process occurs which results in understanding and become a message and information" as stated by Astuti and Suwardi (2021).

Religious figures become trusted characters and are followed by the community including their advice about PHBS like previously elaborated by Nashriyah (2021). Based on this research, religious leaders hold a crucial role who can encourage clean and healthy living behavior for parents. Religious figures can be one among those people to give education to parents working as plastic waste sorters and having young children.

There are various factors affecting children's learning success, among which are heredity factor, environment, interest and talent, freedom, and kids' thinking maturity level (Sa'ida, 2021). Learning success here not only refers to academic achievement but also in other aspects like PHBS. Out of those factors, environment becomes the most influential factor. Environment in this study context may refer to parents, community, or the owner of the waste sorting house. The owner of the waste sorting house is expected to be able to support PHBS implementation to the workers who, at the same time, also have young children. The support will give indirect impact to PHBS habituation on early

childhood children. Both parents and school are not able to stand alone in habituating PHBS to children.

CONSLUSION AND SUGESSTION

Perception is acquired from information which people see, hear, and feel from their experience in their surrounding place. Based on this study, which involves three parents working as plastic waste sorters in a village in Pati, Central Java who have young children aged 0-8 years old as the research subjects, their perception on clean and healthy living behavior (PHBS) is still limited. Parents' perception on PHBS merely refers to having shower and washing hands using soap, which is mostly affected by today's pandemic condition, media, and religious belief of the research subjects. Information sources on PHBS are only restricted to television and religious figures. Inadequate PHBS facilities in the workplace become an obstacle in PHBS implementation by parents working as plastic waste sorters. The impact is that the implementation of parents' PHBS at home is not really maximum which leads to less optimum PHBS implementation by their children as those kids imitate what they see and what is done by their parents.

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