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THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD FROM A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to analyze the roots of violent behavior in early childhood, specifically behavior stemming from prior experiences of violence from a psychological perspective. This study uses a literature review approach, examining national and international research on violence against early childhood, social psychology theory, and reports from institutions such as KPAI and Komnas PA. Research findings indicate that, from a social psychology perspective, the roots of violence in early childhood, whether experienced or perpetrated by children, stem from complex interactions among social learning processes, family environmental conditions, socioeconomic factors, exposure to digital media, and the dynamics of educational institutions. This study is limited to a narrative literature review. It therefore does not provide direct empirical testing of the relationships identified among social learning, family environment, socio-economic pressures, digital media exposure, and educational institutions. Nevertheless, the thematic and chronological synthesis demonstrates that these factors are interconnected through social learning, whereby children observe, interpret, and reproduce behavioral models from their families, peers, teachers, and media environments. The main contribution of this study is the integration of previously fragmented findings into a social-psychological framework that positions social learning as a connecting mechanism linking individual behavior with family, economic, digital, and educational contexts. Future research should employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to empirically examine these interactions and identify how violent behavior develops and changes across different social environments.

Keywords: *Early childhood, Social psychology, Violence*

ABSTRAK
Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis akar perilaku kekerasan pada anak usia dini, khususnya perilaku yang muncul akibat pengalaman kekerasan yang diterima sebelumnya, ditinjau dari perspektif psikologis. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan pustaka *(literature review)* dengan mengkaji penelitian nasional maupun internasional mengenai kekerasan terhadap anak usia dini, teori psikologi sosial, serta laporan dari berbagai lembaga seperti KPAI dan Komnas PA. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari perspektif psikologi sosial, akar kekerasan pada masa usia dini, baik yang dialami maupun dilakukan oleh anak, berasal dari interaksi kompleks antara proses pembelajaran sosial, kondisi lingkungan keluarga, faktor sosial ekonomi, paparan media digital, dan dinamika di lembaga pendidikan. Studi ini terbatas pada tinjauan pustaka naratif, sehingga tidak menyajikan pengujian empiris langsung terhadap hubungan antara pembelajaran sosial, lingkungan keluarga, tekanan sosial ekonomi, paparan media digital, dan lembaga pendidikan. Meskipun

demikian, sintesis tematis dan kronologis menunjukkan bahwa faktor-faktor tersebut saling terhubung melalui pembelajaran sosial, di mana anak mengamati, menafsirkan, dan mereproduksi model perilaku dari keluarga, teman sebaya, guru, serta lingkungan media. Kontribusi utama studi ini adalah mengintegrasikan temuan-temuan yang sebelumnya terpisah ke dalam kerangka kerja psikologi sosial, yang menempatkan pembelajaran sosial sebagai mekanisme penghubung antara perilaku individu dan konteks keluarga, ekonomi, digital, dan pendidikan. Penelitian di masa depan disarankan untuk menggunakan metode campuran *(mixed-methods)* atau desain longitudinal guna menguji interaksi tersebut secara empiris serta mengidentifikasi bagaimana perilaku kekerasan berkembang dan berubah di berbagai lingkungan sosial yang berbeda.

Kata kunci: Anak usia dini; Psikologi sosial; Kekerasan.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of violence against early childhood in Indonesia is a complex social problem and has become increasingly concerning over the past five years. Early childhood, which refers to individuals aged 0–6 years, is a critical developmental stage that is highly vulnerable to environmental influences, including experiences of violence, whether physical, psychological, verbal, or digital. Reports from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the National Child Protection Commission (Komnas PA) indicate that from 2020 to 2025, cases of violence against children have consistently increased. According to the KPAI report in 2024, there were more than 2,800 cases of violence against children, with more than 50% of the victims being children under seven years old. The most prevalent forms of violence include physical violence (32%), psychological or verbal violence (28%), sexual violence (20%), and the remainder being neglect or digital exploitation (KPAI, 2025).

Violence against young children not only causes physical injuries but also has long-term impacts on their social-emotional, cognitive, and moral developm (Ramayulis & Nizar, 2009) pent. (Mulyadi et al., 2025). Children who experience violence tend to exhibit symptoms of anxiety, depression, emotional attachment disorders, and even aggressive behavior later in life. (Fitriani & Suherman, 2024). Unfortunately, in some Indonesian social and family contexts, cases of violence against children are often overlooked due to patriarchal cultural values, authoritarian parenting patterns, family economic pressures, and a lack of positive parenting literacy. A culture that still views children as the property of their parents often means that acts of violence against children are considered normal as a form of discipline or moral education.

According to social psychology theory, particularly social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura, Bandura (1986) violent behavior is the result of a learning process through observation (observational learning). Children learn not only through direct experience but also by observing the behavior of others such as parents, friends, teachers, or community figures. (Puspitasari et al., 2025). When a child witnesses violent behavior in the family, media, or social environment, the child has the potential to imitate that behavior because they see it as an acceptable way to express emotions or resolve conflicts. Children are more likely to imitate aggressive behavior they experience, making them more prone to anger, conflict with peers, or withdrawing from social environments due to feeling unsafe. (Sari et al., 2025). They often see the world as an unfriendly place, which drives them to adopt a defensive mindset and behavior that does not align with social norms. (Bunga et al., 2022). This can affect their relationships with friends, their environment, and even their potential for academic and social success. (Cahyo et al., 2020).

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes the concept of reciprocal determinism, where human behavior is shaped through the interaction between the individual and their environment. This means that a child's aggressive behavior does not solely come from the individual's character, but also from the social system surrounding them. Parents who experience socio-economic pressures, work-related stress, or domestic violence are more likely to commit violence against their children (Cristina et al., 2023). Mass media and digital media that display violence also reinforce aggressive behavior models in children's minds (Nurfadilla et al., 2025).

In addition to family factors, educational institutions also play an important role. Some cases of violence against early childhood occur in school settings or early childhood education institutions (PAUD). KPAI (2023) noted that 28% of early childhood violence cases occurred in educational environments, whether in the form of bullying, physical punishment, or verbal abuse. The Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Indonesian Teachers Federation (FSGI) also reported that 226 bullying cases were recorded, consisting of physical bullying (55.5%), verbal bullying (29.3%), and psychological bullying (15.2%) (KPAI, 2023). Data from January to September 2023 recorded 563 / 31.3%) KPAI having received special child protection complaints (KPAI, 2023), and at the beginning of 2024, KPAI also recorded 141 cases of child bullying (Nisak, 2025). This phenomenon shows that the educational environment, which should be a safe space for children, can actually become a source of threat when it lacks adequate child protection mechanisms.

In the period 2020–2025, a new form of violence also emerged, namely digital violence. The report by KemenPPPA, (2023) reveals that the increasing use of devices and the internet among children has led to greater exposure to harmful content. Young children, who lack digital literacy skills and mature self-control, become easy targets for perpetrators of violence in the online world. (Islam et al., 2025). This form of violence often goes undetected by parents because it occurs secretly and leaves no physical traces, yet it has a significant impact on the child's mental health.

The socio-cultural context of Indonesia also reinforces the dynamics of violence against young children. Traditional values, where children's obedience to parents is often interpreted extremely, result in limiting the space for children to participate in decision-making. Parenting patterns based on authority are still commonly found, where physical punishment is considered a tool for moral education. According to research by Dewi (2024), more than 60% of parents in Indonesia still use physical or verbal violence as a form of discipline. On the other hand, weak law enforcement and inadequate child protection mechanisms at the community level often result in cases of violence not being resolved or being dealt with informally within the family.

Additionally, the development of digital media has expanded the space for children's social learning. Today's children not only learn from their family environment but also from visual content on social media, YouTube, or video games that often normalize violence. According to Bandura (2002)behavioral models that are repeatedly observed will reinforce cognitive schemas and influence the formation of children's attitudes toward violence. Therefore, educational interventions that focus on media literacy and strengthening social control in digital spaces become of particular urgency in the current context. Meanwhile, from the public policy side, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), has initiated the Child-Friendly School and Child-Friendly Village programs, which aim to create violence-free social environments. However, the effectiveness of these programs still needs to be evaluated because several studies Putri and Widodo (2024)have found a gap between normative policy and implementation in the field. The lack of training for teachers and educational staff in recognizing signs of violence means that many cases are not handled professionally.

In an academic context, much research in Indonesia still focuses on the impact of violence on children, while studies on the socio-psychological roots of violent behavior

remain limited. In fact, understanding the root causes is an important step in designing more effective prevention strategies. This literature review seeks to address this gap by examining various research findings and empirical reports that discuss early childhood violence from a social psychology perspective.

METHOD

This study employed a Narrative Literature Review (NLR) with a qualitative approach. The method was selected because the study aimed to synthesize and interpret findings from previous studies, relevant social psychology theories, and reports from official institutions concerning the roots of violence in early childhood. The literature search focused on studies discussing violence against early childhood, verbal and physical violence, family environment, social learning, socioeconomic factors, digital media exposure, educational institutions, and child protection from a social psychology perspective. Relevant literature was identified from national and international academic publications, books, theoretical references, and reports from relevant institutions.

The selected literature was analyzed narratively by identifying recurring concepts, relationships, and patterns across the sources. The findings were then organized into several thematic areas, including social and cultural learning, family environmental conditions, socioeconomic factors and environmental pressure, digital media exposure, and the role of educational institutions. The analysis emphasized the interpretation and synthesis of findings rather than statistical aggregation. The literature was compared and integrated conceptually to explain how social, familial, economic, technological, and educational factors interact in shaping violent behavior during early childhood. As this study relied entirely on secondary sources, no primary data were collected from children, parents, teachers, or educational institutions. The findings therefore represent a synthesis of existing literature and do not constitute direct empirical testing of causal relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A review of the literature on the roots of violence in early childhood from a social psychology perspective indicates that the violence experienced and ultimately perpetrated by children is the product of complex interactions among social learning processes, family environmental conditions, socioeconomic factors, exposure to digital media, and the

dynamics of educational institutions. These findings reinforce the view that violent behavior in children does not occur in isolation but rather emerges through a multi-layered network of social influences.

The results of this literature review indicate that violence experienced or perpetrated by children in early childhood cannot be explained by a single causal factor. Rather, the literature demonstrates a complex interaction among social learning processes, family environmental conditions, socio-economic pressures, exposure to digital media, and the dynamics of educational institutions. These factors operate at different levels but are interconnected through children's social experiences, observations, interpretations, and patterns of interaction. Therefore, the findings are organized thematically and interpreted chronologically to identify similarities, differences, relationships among findings, and the novelty of the present review.

From a chronological perspective, the literature reflects a development from explanations that primarily emphasize individual observation and imitation toward more contextual explanations that examine the family, socioeconomic environment, digital environment, and educational institutions as interconnected social systems. The earlier theoretical foundations of Bandura (1977); Berkowitz (2003); Bronfenbrenner (1998); Vygotsky (1978) provide the conceptual basis for understanding how children's behavior is shaped through observation, interaction, environmental conditions, and social relationships. More recent studies, particularly those published between 2021 and 2025, provide empirical and review-based evidence that these mechanisms remain relevant but operate within increasingly complex family, educational, economic, and digital contexts.

1. Child Violence as a Product of Social and Cultural Learning

One of the most consistent themes identified in the literature is that children's violent behavior can develop through social and cultural learning. According to Bandura Bandura, (1977)Human behavior, including aggressive behavior, is formed through observational learning, whereby individuals learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others, particularly significant figures with whom they have emotional or social relationships. In early childhood, the family represents one of the most important environments in which this learning process occurs (Lubis et al., 2021).

This theoretical explanation is supported by more recent literature. Agustina dan Simatupang, (2022) Research has found that children exposed to verbal abuse within the family environment demonstrated higher levels of aggressive behavior at school. This finding

is important because it indicates that violence can cross social settings: behavior learned within the family may subsequently be expressed in peer and educational environments. Thus, the relationship between family violence and child aggression should not be understood as two separate phenomena, but as part of a continuous social-learning process.

The literature also suggests a chronological development in how this mechanism has been understood. Earlier social learning explanations emphasized observation and imitation, whereas more recent studies increasingly examine the conditions under which observed behavior becomes internalized and reproduced. When children repeatedly observe parents shouting, hitting, threatening, or humiliating others, these behaviors may gradually become interpreted as legitimate strategies for obtaining compliance or resolving conflict. In Bandura's framework, the child's imitation is strengthened when aggressive behavior appears to produce a desired consequence, a process commonly described as vicarious reinforcement.

The cultural context is therefore important. Several studies indicate that physical and verbal punishment may still be understood in some family contexts as a legitimate form of discipline. Violence may be justified by adults as a method for producing obedience, despite its negative consequences for children's development (Apisah et al., 2024; Dewi et al., 2026; Kusumawati & Widjayatri, 2022). This finding is consistent with the social-learning perspective because children do not merely imitate specific acts; they may also learn the underlying social meaning attached to those acts.

A similarity across these studies is that violence is understood as learned through repeated social interaction. However, there is an important difference in emphasis. Bandura's theoretical explanation focuses primarily on the mechanism of observation and reinforcement, whereas the more recent literature places greater emphasis on family norms, disciplinary beliefs, emotional relationships, and cultural interpretations of appropriate parenting. Therefore, the present review extends the interpretation beyond simple imitation by arguing that children may learn both the behavior and the social justification for that behavior.

This interpretation is further supported by recent evidence showing that parenting interventions grounded in social learning theory can reduce physical and emotional violent parenting behaviors, although the magnitude of effects tends to decrease over time (Backhaus et al., 2023). This evidence strengthens the argument that social learning is not only a theoretical explanation for the emergence of violence but also a mechanism through which violent behavior can potentially be modified. Thus, the first thematic finding is that social learning functions as a connecting mechanism between children's exposure to violence and

the subsequent reproduction of aggressive behavior. The novelty of this interpretation lies not in claiming that social learning itself is new, but in positioning social learning as a mechanism that links the different environmental factors identified throughout this review.

2. Family Environmental Conditions

The second major theme concerns family environmental conditions. From a social psychology perspective, the family represents the primary social environment in which children learn emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and behavioral norms. According to (1997), children learn behavior through observation and tend to imitate significant figures, particularly parents. When children repeatedly witness physical, verbal, or emotional aggression, they may learn that aggression is an acceptable response to conflict.

Recent literature provides stronger evidence for the complexity of this relationship. Navarro et al. (2022)A scoping review of 39 peer-reviewed studies identified parental behavior, adverse childhood experiences, and household structural and sociodemographic characteristics as important family variables associated with preschool aggression. Importantly, the review concluded that the relationship between family variables and preschool aggression is complex and may be influenced by other factors, including child-teacher relationships and parent-child characteristics.

This finding represents an important development from earlier explanations. Earlier theoretical perspectives often emphasized the direct influence of parents on children, whereas recent research suggests that the relationship is multidirectional and conditional. In other words, the presence of parental conflict or harsh discipline does not automatically produce violent behavior in every child. Its effects may depend on the quality of other relationships, children's individual characteristics, and the broader social environment.

A family environment characterized by authoritarian communication, low emotional warmth, parental conflict, physical punishment, and economic stress may increase children's exposure to aggressive interaction patterns. Previous social psychological explanations have emphasized the importance of frustration, emotion, interpersonal conflict, and social interaction in the development of aggression (L. Berkowitz, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, Hamid et al., (2021) emphasize the importance of the family environment in shaping children's understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

The literature therefore shows both similarities and differences. The similarity is that studies consistently identify the family as a central context for behavioral development. The

difference lies in the level of explanation. Earlier perspectives tend to focus on direct parent-child interactions, while recent research increasingly considers family structure, adverse experiences, socioeconomic characteristics, and the quality of relationships surrounding the child. This interpretation can also be connected to ecological development theory. Bronfenbrenner and Morris, (1998) conceptualizes the family as part of the child's microsystem, meaning that everyday relationships within this environment can have a substantial influence on development. In families characterized by negative communication, excessive control, lack of empathy, and the use of violence as discipline, children may gradually internalize these patterns as social norms.

From a social attribution perspective, children also develop interpretations of why particular behaviors occur. Malle, (2020) explains that individuals interpret behavior by assigning causes and intentions to actions. When parents frame violence as education or discipline, children may interpret aggression as a legitimate strategy for obtaining compliance. Thus, children do not simply copy what adults do; they may also construct explanations about why adults behave in particular ways.

The long-term implications are also important. Yasmin et al., (2025) indicate that exposure to adverse family conditions can be associated with later risks of violence. Therefore, the family should not be viewed only as the location where violence occurs, but as a social environment in which behavioral norms, emotional patterns, and interpretations of interpersonal power are constructed. Overall, the family literature suggests that family violence is most appropriately understood as a relational and social-learning process rather than a single parent-to-child causal pathway. This interpretation is consistent with Navarro et al. (2022) who emphasized the complex and potentially mediated relationship between family variables and preschool aggression.

3. Socio-Economic Factors and Environmental Pressure

The third theme concerns socioeconomic conditions and environmental pressure. The literature indicates that poverty, overcrowding, employment instability, and financial stress can create conditions that increase parental psychological pressure and interpersonal conflict. Liftyawan et al., (2020) The literature reports that families experiencing poverty, crowded living conditions, or employment-related stress may be more vulnerable to using violence as an emotional outlet.

The chronological development of this theme demonstrates a shift from viewing poverty as a direct cause of violence toward understanding poverty as a contextual risk factor that operates through family stress and social relationships. In this interpretation, economic hardship does not automatically cause parents to become violent. Instead, financial pressure can increase stress, reduce available social resources, and intensify conflict within the household, which may subsequently influence parenting practices. This distinction is important when interpreting the findings. BPS (2020) reported that 9.36% of Indonesia's population lived below the poverty line in 2020. However, poverty statistics alone cannot establish that poverty directly causes violence against children. Rather, they provide a socioeconomic context within which other mechanisms may operate.

Fanta et al., (2025) Further indicates a positive association between family economic stress and physical violence against children. Similarly, Rahayuningsih et al., (2025) highlight that children growing up in vulnerable environments may face developmental difficulties and increased exposure to negative environmental influences. These findings are consistent with the family-level literature but add a layer by demonstrating that parental behavior is also influenced by structural and socioeconomic conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an important chronological context for understanding this relationship. Social restrictions, isolation, and economic pressure altered family interaction patterns and increased stress within many households. UNICEF Indonesia reported an increase in domestic violence involving children during the pandemic (Jensen et al., 2021). The significance of this evidence is that it illustrates how changes in the wider social environment can enter the family microsystem and influence parent-child relationships. The similarities across the literature are therefore clear: family stress, economic vulnerability, and environmental pressure may increase children's exposure to violence. However, the studies differ in their explanations of the mechanism. Some emphasize material conditions, while others emphasize psychological stress, family relationships, or social support.

The synthesis of these findings suggests that socioeconomic disadvantage should not be interpreted as a direct determinant of violent parenting but as a pressure-producing context that may interact with family relationships, emotional regulation, and available social support. This distinction is important because it avoids stigmatizing economically vulnerable families while still recognizing the structural conditions that can increase the risk of violence. Therefore, the socioeconomic theme complements the social-learning and family themes. Economic pressure may create stressful conditions; family interactions may translate this

stress into particular parenting behaviors; and children may then observe, interpret, and reproduce those behaviors through social learning.

4. Digital Media and the Formation of Aggressive Behavior

The fourth theme identified in the literature is the growing role of digital media. Unlike the traditional family and school environments, digital media represents a relatively newer social environment in which children can encounter behavioral models without direct interpersonal contact. (2024) emphasizes the ambivalent nature of digital technology. Digital media can provide educational opportunities while simultaneously exposing children to violent visual and verbal content. Setiyaningrum and Lestari (2023) similarly reported that children aged 4–6 who accessed digital content without adequate supervision demonstrated aggressive behaviors such as kicking and shouting toward peers.

From the perspective of social cognitive theory, digital media can function as a form of symbolic modeling. Children can observe behavioral models through screens and potentially reproduce observed actions even though there is no direct interpersonal interaction with the model. This extends the original social-learning explanation from the family and immediate social environment to a mediated environment.

The chronological difference is particularly important in this theme. Earlier social-learning research primarily focused on face-to-face models, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Contemporary childhood development takes place within a hybrid social environment in which children encounter both direct models and mediated models. Consequently, digital media should not be considered an independent cause of aggression, but rather an additional source of behavioral models that interacts with family supervision, children's developmental characteristics, and the content they encounter.

The findings also reveal differences between studies. Some studies focus on exposure to violent content, whereas others emphasize the amount of screen exposure, parental supervision, or the quality of parent-child interaction around media use. Therefore, simply stating that "digital media causes aggression" would be an oversimplification. The more appropriate interpretation is that digital media may create additional opportunities for observational learning, particularly when violent behavior is repeatedly presented without adult mediation or contextual explanation. Parental monitoring and media literacy therefore become important protective mechanisms. The novelty of this thematic synthesis lies in connecting the digital environment to the same social-learning mechanism operating in the family and school. In this way, digital media is not treated as a separate technological

problem but as an extension of the social environment in which children encounter behavioral models.

5. The Role of Educational Institutions

The fifth theme concerns educational institutions. Schools and early childhood education settings are expected to provide safe environments and protect children from violence. However, the literature demonstrates that educational institutions can also become contexts in which violence is experienced or reproduced. Nugraha and Kurniawati (2024) reported that one in four early childhood education children in major Indonesian cities had experienced some form of violence at school, either directly or indirectly. Nurfadilah and Munjin, (2022) identified several factors associated with violence in educational institutions, including inadequate teacher preparation in positive parenting, high workloads, and school cultures that tolerate physical punishment.

From a social psychological perspective, schools operate as microsocial systems. Children learn not only through formal instruction but also by observing how teachers and peers communicate, respond to conflict, exercise authority, and resolve disagreements. If physical or verbal punishment is normalized within the school environment, children may interpret violence as an acceptable component of interpersonal relationships.

Recent international literature reinforces the importance of this argument. Falla et al., (2023)In a systematic review of 52 studies, it was found that research on aggression and victimization in early childhood education remains methodologically diverse and that longitudinal research has increased in recent years. Their review also highlights the importance of understanding aggression within the specific interpersonal and classroom context rather than treating it simply as an individual child characteristic.

Similarly, Baumgarten et al., (2022) found that school-based interventions incorporating teacher training, positive discipline, teacher-student relationship improvement, and nurturing learning environments can reduce teacher violence against children. This provides an important contrast with studies that primarily identify risk factors: the school environment is not only a possible source of violence but also a potential setting for changing violent interaction patterns. The similarity among the studies is that teacher behavior and school norms influence children's experiences. The difference lies in the direction of the evidence. Some studies focus on identifying why violence occurs, whereas more recent intervention research examines how institutional practices can reduce violence.

This distinction contributes to the chronological development of the literature. Earlier research largely identified school violence as a behavioral or disciplinary problem. More recent research increasingly approaches it as a systemic problem involving teacher practices, institutional norms, relationships, and intervention structures. Therefore, transforming educational institutions into child-friendly environments requires more than prohibiting physical punishment. It requires changes in teacher-student relationships, teacher training, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, positive discipline, and institutional norms.

6. Thematic and Chronological Synthesis: Similarities, Differences, and Relationships among Findings

The five themes identified above are not independent categories. Instead, they form a layered system of influence. The literature consistently demonstrates that children are exposed to multiple behavioral models simultaneously: parents and other family members, peers and teachers, socioeconomic conditions, and digital media. Chronologically, the literature can be interpreted as moving through three broad stages. First, foundational social psychological theories emphasized observation, imitation, reinforcement, and interpersonal interaction (Bandura, 1986; L. M. Berkowitz, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978). Second, subsequent research expanded the analysis toward the family and ecological environment, emphasizing parenting practices, family relationships, socioeconomic conditions, and social support (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Hamid et al., 2021; Mardiyah et al., 2026). Third, more recent research has increasingly examined complex interactions among family, school, digital environments, and intervention systems (Backhaus et al., 2023; Baumgarten et al., 2022; Falla et al., 2023; Navarro et al., 2022).

There are several important similarities across the literature. First, most studies recognize that violence is socially embedded rather than purely individual. Second, family relationships consistently appear as an important context for children's behavioral development. Third, social learning provides a plausible mechanism through which observed behavior may be reproduced. Fourth, environmental stressors can intensify the risk of violent interaction.

However, the literature also demonstrates several differences. Some studies emphasize individual behavioral mechanisms, whereas others emphasize family relationships or structural conditions. Some focus on children as perpetrators, while others examine children as victims. Similarly, some research examines violence within the family, whereas other studies investigate peer or teacher violence within educational institutions. The digital

environment introduces another difference because behavioral models are mediated through technology rather than direct interpersonal interaction.

These differences indicate that no single theoretical or environmental factor is sufficient to explain violence in early childhood. Instead, the findings suggest a process in which structural pressures influence family and institutional conditions; family and institutional environments provide behavioral models and norms; children interpret these experiences; and social learning contributes to the reproduction or modification of behavior.

7. Novelty of the Present Literature Review

Based on the synthesis above, the novelty of this article should not be interpreted as the discovery of a completely new individual risk factor. Most of the factors discussed family violence, socioeconomic stress, social learning, digital exposure, and educational environments have already been examined in previous studies. The novelty of the present review lies in the integrated social-psychological synthesis of these previously fragmented factors. Rather than discussing family, socioeconomic conditions, digital media, and educational institutions as separate causes, this review places them within a common explanatory framework in which social learning functions as a connecting mechanism. Therefore, the context of the relationship can be formulated as follows:

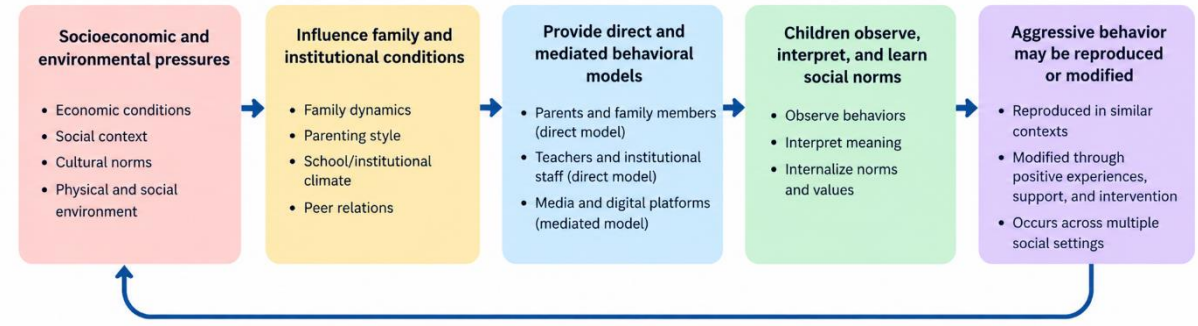


Figure 1. Integrative framework of the development of violent behavior in children through social learning mechanisms.

This synthesis also explains why violence experienced in one environment may appear in another. For example, a child who observes verbal aggression at home may reproduce similar communication patterns with peers at school. Conversely, positive teacher-child relationships and non-violent parenting may provide alternative behavioral models that weaken the reproduction of aggressive behavior.

Recent review evidence supports this integrated interpretation. (2022) demonstrate that family-related factors associated with preschool aggression are complex and may be mediated

by other relational variables. (2023) show that aggression in early childhood education should be understood within interpersonal classroom dynamics and that methodological approaches are becoming increasingly diverse. (2023) further demonstrate that social-learning-based parenting interventions can reduce physical and emotional violence, providing evidence that the same mechanisms involved in behavioral learning can also be used for behavioral change. Meanwhile, (2022)indicate that changing teacher practices and school environments can reduce teacher violence.

Consequently, the principal contribution of this review is a multilayered social-psychological interpretation of the roots of violence in early childhood, in which violence is understood as a dynamic process connecting individual learning with family, socioeconomic, digital, and educational environments. This perspective provides a stronger conceptual basis for future research and intervention because prevention should not focus exclusively on changing children's behavior. Instead, it should also address the social environments and behavioral models surrounding the child.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that violence in early childhood is best understood as a socially learned and environmentally embedded phenomenon. The interaction between family practices, socioeconomic pressures, digital exposure, and educational environments can create either risk or protection. Therefore, future interventions should combine positive parenting, teacher professional development, media literacy, family support, and child-friendly institutional practices rather than relying on a single intervention component.

CONCLUSION

The interaction of social learning, family environment, socio-economic pressures, digital media exposure, and educational institutions shapes the roots of violence in early childhood. The thematic and chronological synthesis shows that, although previous studies emphasize different factors, they consistently demonstrate that children learn and reproduce aggressive behavior through social interactions, behavioral models, and environmental norms. The novelty of this review lies in integrating these previously fragmented factors by positioning social learning as a connecting mechanism between family, socioeconomic, digital, and educational environments. Therefore, preventing violence requires a multilayered approach involving positive parenting, family support, media literacy, teacher training, positive discipline, and child-friendly educational environments.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The first author, Asri Cahayanengdian, contributed to conceptualization, methodology, literature search, data curation, analysis and interpretation of literature, writing (original draft), and writing (review and editing). The second author, Wa Ode Siti Hamsinah Hari, contributed to conceptualization, literature search, analysis and interpretation of literature, critical review of the manuscript, and writing (review and editing). Finally, the third author, Adela Anita, contributed to literature search, data curation, analysis and interpretation of literature, manuscript reflection, and writing (review and editing). All authors contributed to the development and refinement of the research framework, discussed and interpreted the findings, critically reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and agreed to be responsible for all aspects of the work.

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