

Community-Based Interventions in Preventing Child Violence: A Case Study in Bale Village

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Doi: [10.31316/g-couns.v9i3.7951](https://doi.org/10.31316/g-couns.v9i3.7951)

Abstract

This study examines community-based interventions aimed at preventing child violence in Bale Village, Donggala Regency, employing a descriptive qualitative research approach. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation with informants, including the Village Head, Chairman of the PKPA Foundation, foundation staff, and parents. Based on the theory of child protection Holt (2019), it was found that child violence has an impact on children's psychological and social conditions. Interventions include public education, strengthening local norms, child protection forums, and village partnerships. This study maps a model of local value-based interventions that can be replicated. The implication emphasizes the importance of institutional synergy and strengthening village policies. The limitations of this research are its scope, which is confined to a single region.

Keywords: children, intervention, prevention, violence cases

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis intervensi berbasis masyarakat dalam pencegahan kekerasan anak di Desa Bale, Kabupaten Donggala, dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi dengan informan seperti Kepala Desa, Ketua Yayasan PKPA, staf yayasan, dan orang tua. Berdasarkan teori perlindungan anak Holt (2019), ditemukan bahwa kekerasan anak berdampak pada kondisi psikologis dan sosial anak. Intervensi termasuk pendidikan publik, penguatan norma lokal, forum perlindungan anak, dan kemitraan desa. Studi ini memetakan model intervensi berbasis nilai lokal yang dapat direplikasi. Implikasinya menekankan pentingnya sinergi kelembagaan dan penguatan kebijakan desa. Keterbatasan penelitian ini berada dalam lingkup satu wilayah.

Keywords: anak, intervensi, pencegahan, kasus kekerasan

Article info

Received May 2025, accepted July 2025, published August 2025

Published by: Program Studi Bimbingan dan Konseling
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan
Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta



INTRODUCTION

Child protection is a fundamental issue in sustainable social development, particularly in the context of a legal framework that prioritizes children's rights as an integral part of human rights (Bidaishiyeva et al., 2018; Rijal & Wamafima, 2024; Skelton, 2018). Every child has the right to live, grow, develop, and participate reasonably in accordance with the dignity and dignity of humanity, and to be protected from violence and discrimination (Law Number 35 of 2014 Concerning Child Protection, 2014). Although the legal framework has provided a comprehensive umbrella, in practice, the implementation of child protection still faces major challenges, both in terms of policy implementation and social dynamics of the community. Facts show that violence against children is still rampant in various forms, even tending to increase from year to year. Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) shows that in 2023, there will be 21,757 cases of violence against children in Indonesia (Kemenpppa, 2024). This figure illustrates systemic failures to ensure a safe environment for children, highlighting that protection efforts cannot be normative or law-based, but must incorporate a comprehensive and contextual approach. Violence is not only defined as physical acts such as beating or abuse, but also includes psychological, sexual, neglect, and exploitation violence. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) defines violence as the use of physical force or power, either in the form of threats or actual actions, against an individual or group that has the potential to result in physical injury, psychological disorder, and death. While (Jamil, 2003; Önal et al., 2023) added that violence against children can have a long-term impact on children's mental health, social development, and quality of life in the future. This situation is exacerbated by weak monitoring and reporting systems at the grassroots level, as well as low public awareness of children's rights. (Alhajaji et al., 2024; Brown et al., 2017) explained that many cases of violence against children are not reported because they are considered domestic affairs or considered normal in the traditional parenting process. This paradigm hinders the effectiveness of child protection programs that should be able to penetrate cultural and structural boundaries, (Dewi et al., 2022; Laird & Williams, 2023).

The phenomenon of violence against children in Indonesia, including in rural areas such as Bale Village, Donggala Regency, cannot be separated from the local social and cultural context that often normalizes violence as a form of discipline or correction to children's behavior. In traditional societies, children are usually seen as objects of parental supervision and control, rather than as subjects. This is reflected in a variety of harsh and authoritarian parenting practices, where actions such as pinching, spanking, and cursing children are considered part of the educational process. Parenting patterns are strongly influenced by prevailing cultural norms, which can significantly affect a child's mental health (Bornstein, 2013; Elarousy & Abed, 2019). Interviews with the Center for the Study and Protection of Children (PKPA) Foundation revealed that the forms of violence prevalent in Bale Village include bullying at school, fights between children, beatings by parents, domestic violence, and juvenile delinquency involving alcohol and other risky activities. This shows that violence against children is not just an act of individual deviance but reflects broader structural and cultural problems, including poverty, low levels of education, gender inequality, and the weak capacity of local institutions to provide protection. A study by Lansford et al (2014) asserts that corporal punishment of children correlates with an increase in behavioral problems such as anxiety and aggression, especially if it is not balanced with parental warmth.



The village of Bale is a clear example of how limited access to child protection services exacerbates children's vulnerability to various forms of violence. As an area with a thriving social infrastructure, Bale Village faces several challenges, such as a lack of professional counsellors, a lack of integrated service facilities for child victims of violence, and limited information and education on children's rights. In addition, in Bale Village, violence against children is not only influenced by economic conditions and low parenting literacy, but also by strong cultural norms that normalize violence as a form of discipline. The lack of access to child protection services and the weak role of local institutions exacerbate this condition. To address this situation, the Center for Child Studies and Protection (PKPA) Foundation developed a community-based intervention model that involves village governments, communities, and indigenous leaders.

In situations like this, children who are victims of violence often do not receive adequate legal protection, let alone psychosocial recovery. Not infrequently, cases of violence are resolved in families without the involvement of the authorities, which ultimately ignores the victim's right to justice. PKPA, as a civil society institution, seeks to bridge this gap through a series of interventions designed to comprehensively target the root of the problem. These interventions include not only individual assistance for children who are victims of violence, but also training for parents and teachers, public education campaigns, and institutional capacity building at the village level. The approach used by the PKPA reflects a deep understanding of the complexity of social dynamics in Bale Village. In its implementation, the intervention is not carried out unilaterally, but rather involves various local actors, including community leaders, village officials, teachers, and health cadres. Through participatory methods, PKPA aims to foster collective awareness that child protection is a shared responsibility, not solely the task of formal institutions, such as the police or social services. This strategy aligns with the principle of a child-friendly community, where the surrounding environment plays an active role in ensuring that children's rights are fulfilled.

Additionally, PKPA also considers the local cultural dimension in designing its intervention programs. For example, in a society where traditional values are still strong, an educational approach is implemented with conventional leaders so that residents more easily accept the age of child protection. The integration of local values into child protection programs is key to the success of contextual and sustainable community-based interventions. This aligns with the view (Bornstein, 2013) that parenting approaches should consider the cultural context to support children's mental health. This concept aligns with the theory presented by Holt (2019) in his book "Child Protection", which asserts that effective interventions must consider all aspects of the child's life, including physical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions.

However, there are still few studies that have reviewed in depth how community-based interventions are implemented in local contexts with specific socio-cultural characteristics. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the form of intervention carried out by PKPA in preventing violence against children in Bale Village; analyze the role of village governments in supporting prevention efforts; and analyze the psychological impact of violence on child victims in villages. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of child protection by emphasizing the importance of a contextual and participatory community-based approach. Meanwhile, its practical contribution is to present strategic recommendations for local actors in similar areas to build an effective and sustainable child protection system.



Drawing on Holt's (2019) theory of child protection, this study examines the dimensions of understanding violence, its psychological impact, prevention strategies, and the role of local institutions. Through this approach, it is hoped that the research results will serve as a reference for the development of child protection policies that are adaptive to local values and the social structure of the village community. This approach is particularly relevant in areas with limited access to social services, such as Bale Village, the location of this study. Using Bale Village as a study site, this study aims not only to map the forms of violence that occur but also to explore the intervention strategies carried out by PKPA and their impact on broader social change. In this context, the intervention approach used by PKPA can serve as a model of best practice that can be replicated in other areas with similar characteristics. This evaluation of intervention strategies will provide an in-depth understanding of what is working, the challenges faced, and how strategies can be strengthened within the framework of sustainable child protection. In other words, this research is not only descriptive but also analytical, reflecting community-based child protection practices.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore community interventions in the prevention of child violence in Bale Village, Donggala Regency. This method was chosen because it aligns with the research objectives of understanding social phenomena in depth within a natural context (Rukajat, 2018; Rukin, 2022; Sugiyono, 2022). The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, which is based on specific criteria that are considered relevant and provide in-depth information about the topic being researched. The informants consist of, namely the Village Head, because they play a strategic role in the implementation of local policies related to child protection, the Chairman and staff of the PKPA Foundation, because they are the main implementers of interventions in the field, parents of children who are directly involved in the intervention process or have experience with child violence and Children who are victims of violence, who have received psychosocial assistance from PKPA. This election aims to obtain diverse and in-depth perspectives from various parties directly involved in the issue of child protection in the village. To achieve the research objectives based on the problems studied, a study with the title 'Intervention by the Center for the Study and Protection of Children in the Prevention of Child Violence Cases in Bale Village' was conducted.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing researchers to explore narrative and reflective information. Observation is used to understand social interaction in PKPA activities and dynamics in the village environment. Documentation in the form of minutes, activity reports, and local archives are used as a complement to the data. To increase the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was carried out, namely by comparing data from various sources (village heads, foundation staff, parents, and children) and using various techniques (interviews, observations, documentation), (Sugiyono, 2022; Suprianto, 2024).

Child protection theory was put forward by Holt (2019). It was chosen because it offers a comprehensive framework for understanding violence against children from physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects. The framework also includes intervention strategies at three levels: primary (initial prevention), secondary (targeting vulnerable groups), and tertiary (supporting victim recovery), which are highly relevant



to the approach used by PKPA. The analysis of the data in this study aimed to identify the extent to which elements of Holt's theory were reflected in intervention practice in Bale Village, as well as to provide a basis for building a stronger theoretical and practical understanding of community-based child protection. The instrument in this study is the researcher himself, serving as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2022). Data analysis was carried out interactively through three stages, as outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994): data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. This process co-occurs during and after data collection, utilizing a categorization-based thematic approach derived from Holt's theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to understand in depth community-based interventions in Child Protection in Villages, Donggala Regency. The phenomenon of violence against children is a serious problem that not only impacts physical conditions, but also causes long-term psychological trauma. Therefore, a systematic, participatory, and collaborative approach between various parties, both from elements of community institutions, village governments, to families, is needed in creating a safe and conducive environment for children's growth and development. The results of this study are presented based on field findings obtained through in-depth interviews with various informants, such as foundation staff, village heads, parents, and children who have experienced violence. The analysis of this qualitative data utilizes theory (Holt, 2019) to provide a concrete overview of the intervention carried out by PKPA, the community response, and the active role of the village government in preventing and handling cases of child violence, which can be presented as follows.

Understanding Child Abuse

The results of interviews with parents and the community show different views on violence against children. Some parents consider physical violence as part of the process of disciplining their children, without realizing the negative impact it causes, both physically and psychologically. This kind of view reflects a lack of understanding of non-physical forms of violence, which are often more difficult to recognize but have a more profound impact. As affirmed by Finkelhor et al (2015), physical abuse that occurs in children can lead to emotional disorders that last into adulthood, including depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders. Although not directly visible, the psychological impact caused by physical violence can damage a child's self-esteem and affect their social development. In addition to physical violence, emotional and verbal violence were also found in interviews with respondents. Many parents do not realize that treatment such as insults, threats, or neglect of the emotional needs of the child is also a form of violence. Straus et al (2013) in their research showed that emotional abuse is often more harmful because it leaves no visible physical scars, but can significantly interfere with children's mental well-being. In this interview, some parents confess that they feel upset or frustrated with their child's behavior, which then translates into verbal abuse. This shows that there are still many parents who do not understand positive ways to educate their children without using violence, both physical and emotional.

Neglect is also one form of violence found in these interviews. Some parents consider that providing for their child's basic needs, such as food and clothing, is enough to fulfill their responsibilities. However, emotional neglect, such as a lack of attention and affection, can have a detrimental impact on a child's development. Garbarino &



Ganzel (2000) emphasizes that emotional neglect can interfere with a child's social and cognitive development, which in turn affects the way they interact with their surroundings. This lack of emotional attention is often overlooked by parents who are busy with their daily routines, even though mindfulness and positive interaction are essential for a child's healthy development.

Public awareness of violence against children also needs to be increased, especially related to forms of violence that are not physically visible. The results of the interviews show that although some people understand physical violence as a serious problem, many are still unaware of the impact of emotional abuse and neglect. Taylor et al (2013) explain that societies that do not have a clear understanding of non-physical violence tend to underestimate its impact on children. Therefore, education about children's rights and the importance of positive parenting is needed to create awareness and prevent violence against children. This can be achieved through media campaigns, educational programs in schools, and community counseling. The importance of community empowerment in preventing violence against children can also be seen from the interviews conducted. Some respondents revealed that they felt they did not have the understanding and skills to report the violence they encountered in the environment. (Chen & Scannapieco, 2010) emphasizing that the active participation of communities in reporting and identifying violence against children is essential to creating a safe environment for children. Therefore, public policies that support community empowerment and strengthen the child violence reporting system need to be continuously developed. Programs that involve communities in monitoring and reporting violence are essential to prevent further violence and provide better protection for children.

The Psychological Impact of Violence

Violence against children is a form of human rights violation that has long-term consequences for the psychological well-being of children. Based on the theory of developmental trauma, which suggests that violence experienced by children can interfere with three main aspects of psychological development, namely: emotional regulation, a sense of security in the environment, and the ability to form interpersonal relationships (Trickett & McBride-Chang, 1995; Holt, 2019). These three indicators are important references in identifying the psychological impact experienced by child victims of violence. The findings in this study show that violence, both physical and psychological, triggers significant emotional disturbances in children. The informant (IN) stated that he felt scared and anxious after experiencing violence, which indicates dysfunction in the regulation of emotions. Fears that not only arise at the time of the incident but continue in everyday life illustrate how violent trauma affects a child's perception of the world as an unsafe place. This is in line with research by Gilbert et al (2009), which found that children who are victims of violence tend to develop alertness to threats and have long-term anxiety disorders.

Furthermore, the FQ informant in the interview revealed that he experienced chronic anxiety and feelings of depression every time he recalled the violent incident. She tries to calm herself down as a coping mechanism. Still, the improper use of coping mechanisms without psychological support can lead to more serious psychological disorders, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research results (Alisic et al., 2014) suggest that children who are victims of violence often experience PTSD symptoms that include nightmares, traumatic flashbacks, and difficulty concentrating. The psychological impact of violence is not only seen in the form of



emotional disorders but also aspects of children's behavior and social development. Children who are victims of violence tend to exhibit withdrawn behaviors, an inability to establish healthy social relationships, and an unwillingness to trust others, as seen in the experiences of informants. According to Holt (2019), Impaired ability to form interpersonal relationships can hinder the child's socialization process and increase the risk of social isolation. In addition, children who have been traumatized by violence are also at risk of sleep disturbances, decreased academic achievement, and adjustment disorders. As stated in research by Norman et al. (2012), violence against children is positively correlated with psychopathological disorders such as depression, generalized anxiety disorders, and aggressive behavior. Interviews with the victim's children and parents show that violence causes long-term traumatic effects: fear, withdrawal, decreased achievement, and even depressive symptoms. One of the respondents mentioned not being able to sleep and continuing to feel alert, which is a hallmark of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This confirms the indicator in theory, Holt (2019), and findings of Alisic et al. (2014) that violence against children affects emotional regulation, safe perception, and the ability to build interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, psychological counseling services in this village are not available adequately. This indicates a gap between policies and services, which should be of concern to stakeholders. The practical implication is that schools in areas such as Bale Village need to provide counsellors or establish cooperation with relevant institutions to deal with child trauma professionally.

Child Violence Prevention Strategy

The prevention strategy for violence against children implemented by the Center for Child Protection Studies Foundation (PKPA) reflects a layered and community-based approach that aligns with the theory of preventing child violence proposed by the Institute for Child Studies (Holt, 2019). According to Holt, an effective prevention strategy consists of three levels of intervention, namely: (1) primary, which aims to prevent violence before it occurs; (2) secondary, which targets high-risk vulnerable groups; and (3) tertiary, which focuses on handling and recovering victims. In this context, the PKPA combines three levels of intervention in a comprehensive programmatic approach. The initial stage of the PKPA strategy, involving the establishment of partnerships with village governments, reflects primary interventions aimed at creating a conducive social and institutional environment for child protection. Research by Erdianti et al. (2022) confirmed that the involvement of local authorities in child protection programs plays a crucial role in shaping village regulations that address the issue of violence. By making the village government a strategic partner, PKPA applies the principles of community participation and empowerment as affirmed by (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) In the ecological theory of child development, microsystems (families and local communities) have a great influence on children's well-being.

Furthermore, the PKPA strategy, which emphasizes the importance of obtaining consent from the victim's family before assisting, is part of a secondary intervention that prioritizes protection ethics and children's rights. This strategy not only strengthens the legitimacy of the approach but is also in line with the trauma-informed care approach, where the mentoring process is carried out by paying attention to the psychosocial conditions of children and families (Bryson et al., 2017; Bargeman et al., 2021). This step also reflects the understanding that rejection from the family can be overcome through an empathetic and communicative approach. Case deepening, carried out by PKPA using



psychological and social techniques, strengthens tertiary interventions in the model Holt (2019), where support for victims is provided systematically and professionally. It aims not only to address the consequences of violence but also to identify the root causes, such as power dynamics in the family, structural poverty, or permissive cultural norms toward violence. In line with that, research by Slack et al. (2017) affirms that violence against children is often the result of accumulated systemic pressures and a lack of access to healthy parenting education.

In addition to handling cases, efforts to prevent PKPA through the establishment of the Child Protection Forum (FPA) show the implementation of primary interventions that empower the community to carry out early detection and education. FPA functions as a social mechanism that integrates various local actors, including community leaders, teachers, and village officials. The existence of this forum aligns with the findings of Cao & Maguire-Jack (2016) & Lo & Cho (2021), which suggest that community involvement in formal and informal structures can enhance the effectiveness of reporting and violence prevention. This strategy also strengthens the indicator of a safe society, according to Holt (2019), specifically the existence of a social structure that supports child protection, facilitates communication between citizens, and provides an accessible reporting system. The establishment of a children's creativity studio is part of a holistic intervention in a child development-based prevention approach. By providing a safe and inclusive space, the studio enhances children's psychological resilience while also equipping them with the social and emotional skills necessary for developing character and self-awareness. This approach is consistent with the principles of social learning (Blute, 1981), which states that children can learn prosocial behavior through role models and positive interactions. In this context, the studio serves as a medium for character education and strengthening children's identities that are resilient to environmental pressures.

The Role of the Village Government

The study's results demonstrate that the Bale Village Government plays a strategic role in preventing violence against children through a collaborative, participatory, and value-based approach. The Bale Village Government's commitment to long-term partnerships with civil society institutions, particularly the Center for Child Studies and Protection (PKPA) Foundation, represents the transformative practices of the village government. The village government not only plays the role of an administrative facilitator but also serves as an agent of social change, actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of child protection programs. Referring to *the theory of Community-Oriented Governance* Holt (2019), there are three main indicators of the role of village governments in violence prevention, namely: (1) institutional collaboration, (2) strengthening local norms and values, and (3) building a community-based protection system. The Bale Village Government meets these three indicators concretely. First, institutional collaboration is reflected in the synergy between the village government, PKPA, DP3A Donggala Regency, and customary institutions, as well as community leaders. Second, the strengthening of local norms is realized through the involvement of customary institutions in mediating cases of violence and the preparation of customary rules related to child protection. Third, the establishment of a community-based protection system is demonstrated by the creation of the Child Protection Task Force (PA Task Force) and the issuance of Village Regulations (Perdes) aimed at preventing child marriage.



This research aligns with studies conducted by Latief et al. (2022) and Mawarti et al. (2019), which emphasize the importance of village governments in creating a child protection ecosystem through an integrative approach that incorporates local social and institutional elements. This is also reinforced by the findings of Asgar et al. (2022), which show that the effectiveness of child protection policies at the village level is greatly influenced by the active involvement of the village government in the legislative process and community education. Furthermore, the approach taken by the Bale Village Government is also consistent with the concept of child-centered governance, where local government policies and actions are based on the best interests of the child. The Participatory Village Regulation (Perdes) not only provides a local legal basis to prevent the practice of violence and child marriage, but also affirms the existence of villages as government entities that have normative authority in responding to social issues.

In addition to the institutional aspect, community education carried out by the village government is a crucial strategy in fostering collective awareness about the importance of child protection. Education conducted through citizen forums, schools, and family counseling has increased the community's capacity to recognize and respond to potential violence. In perspective, Holt (2019) categorizes this effort as strengthening social literacy, which involves increasing public understanding of children's rights and the impact of violence, a prerequisite for creating a safe and supportive social environment for children. The implications of this study suggest that villages have significant potential in developing social development models that are responsive to children's rights, provided there is a political commitment, cross-sectoral cooperation, and integration of local values into public policies. The success of Bale Village in mainstreaming child protection issues into the village government structure is a clear example that the prevention of violence against children is not only the domain of central or regional governments, but also a strategic responsibility of the village as the spearhead of the government.

Thus, the Bale Village Government plays an active role as a strategic partner in the prevention of child violence, including by issuing Village Regulations (Perdes) on child protection, establishing a Child Protection Task Force, and involving indigenous leaders in advocacy efforts. This approach represents a form of institutional collaboration that aligns with the participatory governance framework. However, this role is not evenly distributed in other villages. Therefore, the practical implication of this research is the need for a replicable institutional model: village child protection forums should be structurally expanded and integrated with violence reporting systems, as part of village governance.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that community-based interventions in Bale Village are a strategic approach to tackling violence against children. By prioritizing community participation, institutional synergy, and cultural approaches, this intervention enables the development of a more adaptive and sustainable protection system at the village level. These findings show that prevention efforts are not only technical or administrative, but also require the support of local values and strong social relations. The primary contribution of this research lies in mapping collaborative models between civil society and village governments that have proven effective in creating safe spaces for children. The study enriched the literature on child protection by presenting locally based empirical practices that can be replicated in regions with similar characteristics. In addition, the



approach used opens space for reflection on the importance of transforming the role of village government from a bureaucratic entity to a key actor in social change. As a practical recommendation, local and national governments should encourage affirmative policies that support the establishment of the Village Child Protection Task Force, the development of Village Regulations on child protection, and the integration of positive parenting education into community empowerment programs. Civil society institutions are advised to expand the scope of culture-based interventions to increase public acceptance of child protection values. For future research, it is recommended that a comparative study be conducted between villages to assess the consistency and success of community interventions in various social contexts. In addition, longitudinal research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact on the child's psychosocial condition after the intervention, as well as to explore the child's involvement as an active agent in the protection system. This research has several limitations. First, as a single case study, the findings cannot be generalized to all rural contexts in Indonesia. Second, data is obtained through the informant's subjective narrative, which cannot always be quantitatively verified; therefore, it is highly dependent on the respondents' credibility and the triangulation of field data. Third, due to time and resource constraints, this study did not thoroughly analyze the long-term changes following the intervention.

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