

## The Relationship Between Parenting Practices and Noble Character in Early Childhood

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### Abstract

Early childhood is a crucial period for character and moral development. Parents play a role in fostering noble character in children through daily parenting practices. This study aimed to determine the relationship between parenting practices and the development of noble character in early childhood at TK Negeri Satu Atap (Integrated Public Kindergarten). A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed. The study population consisted of 30 parents of early childhood students; all were included in the sample using a total sampling technique. Data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test, following tests for normality and linearity. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between parenting practices and the development of noble character in early childhood, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.371$  and a significance value of  $p = 0.044$ . These values indicate that the relationship between the two variables falls into the low category. Thus, better parenting patterns as reported in this study tend to be associated with better noble character development in children, although the observed relationship is low.

**Keywords:** parenting practices; noble character; early childhood; correlational study; parents

### Abstrak

Anak usia dini merupakan masa penting dalam pembentukan karakter dan akhlak. Orang tua memiliki peran dalam mendukung perkembangan akhlak mulia anak melalui pengasuhan yang diterapkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara pengasuhan orang tua dengan perkembangan akhlak mulia anak usia dini di TK Negeri Satu Atap. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 30 orang tua anak usia dini dan seluruhnya dijadikan sampel dengan teknik total sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert dan dianalisis melalui statistik deskriptif serta uji korelasi Product Moment Pearson setelah dilakukan uji normalitas dan linearitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif dan signifikan antara pengasuhan orang tua dengan perkembangan akhlak mulia anak usia dini, dengan nilai koefisien korelasi sebesar  $r = 0,371$  dan nilai signifikansi  $p = 0,044$ . Nilai tersebut menunjukkan bahwa hubungan antara kedua variabel berada pada kategori rendah. Dengan demikian, semakin baik pengasuhan orang tua yang dilaporkan dalam penelitian ini, cenderung disertai dengan perkembangan akhlak mulia anak yang lebih baik, meskipun hubungan yang ditemukan tergolong rendah.

**Kata kunci:** pengasuhan orang tua; akhlak mulia; anak usia dini; korelasional; orang tua.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Under Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, early childhood covers the age range of 0 to 6 years, a crucial phase of extraordinary growth and development often referred to as the golden age (Habe & AHIRUDDIN, 2017). In this phase, physical, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and religious and moral aspects develop simultaneously. In line with this, (Aisyah, 2021) defines early childhood as a subject undergoing rapid physical and psychological development, in which appropriate stimulation serves as a vital foundation for supporting the child's overall development.

Psychologically, children aged 5–6 years, the age range that forms the context of this study, begin to imitate adult behavior, understand simple rules, and develop empathy, although their moral understanding remains concrete and oriented toward the immediate consequences of an action (Hurlock & B, 1999). In line with this, (Wahidah, A. F. N., & Maemonah, 2020) shows that children aged 4–6 years are at Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage of moral development, in which their understanding of right and wrong is strongly influenced by authority figures such as parents and teachers. These characteristics make the indicators of noble character measured in this study, such as greeting others, telling the truth, respecting parents and teachers, sharing with friends, and keeping the environment clean, relevant to this age stage, because such behaviors are concrete and can be directly observed by parents. They are also aligned with the religious-moral and social-emotional aspects of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum, whose cultivation at school needs to be strengthened through consistent parenting at home.

Noble character is good behavior that reflects moral and ethical values in daily life. In early childhood, it must be translated into concrete behaviors that can be habituated and observed every day, such as greeting others, speaking kindly and honestly, respecting parents and teachers, sharing with friends, keeping oneself and the environment clean, taking responsibility, and practicing simple acts of worship appropriate to the child's developmental stage. In the Islamic view, akhlak plays a very important role in shaping a person's personality from an early age. Imam Al-Ghazali defined akhlak as a trait firmly rooted in the soul from which actions arise spontaneously, without the need for lengthy consideration (Hasanah et al., 2023), and held that it is formed through training, habituation, and the

consistent repetition of good behavior rather than appearing automatically at birth. The formation of children's akhlak therefore requires continuous role modeling and habituation by the closest environment, especially parents and educators (Zainudin, 1991).

In Islamic moral education, the scope of noble character is commonly mapped according to the object of the relationship, namely akhlak toward Allah, toward oneself, toward others (including parents, teachers, and friends), and toward the environment. Building on this framework and on Al-Ghazali's concept of moral education as reviewed by Zainudin (1991) and Bahri (2022), the researchers synthesized five dimensions of noble character in early childhood as the instrument blueprint: character toward Allah, toward oneself, toward parents and teachers, toward friends, and toward the environment. Each dimension was translated into concrete behavioral indicators that parents can observe, such as habituating prayer and simple acts of worship, maintaining personal cleanliness, being polite and obedient, sharing and playing harmoniously, and disposing of trash properly.

The formation of noble character depends greatly on the family as the primary pillar of education in the early phase of a child's life, with parents serving as the main role models, guides, and agents of behavioral habituation. Baumrind (1966) explained that parenting can be mapped along two fundamental dimensions, namely warmth or responsiveness (affection, communication, and support for the child's needs) and demandingness or control (supervision and enforcement of discipline), whose combination produces authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. Proportionate parenting is believed to help children internalize honesty, orderliness, responsibility, friendliness, and social empathy, whereas inappropriate parenting may hinder the development of their moral character (Baumrind, 1966). Hurlock similarly argues that warm and consistent parenting tends to be associated with a positive self-concept, self confidence, and good social adaptability, whereas harsh and inconsistent parenting is more often found together with anxiety, aggressive behavior, and low self esteem (Hurlock & B, 1999).

Besides the family, teachers' role modeling and a positive school culture also contribute to the development of children's personality and social character (Retnaningtyas, W., & Zulkarnaen, 2023). Similarly, (Prasanti, D., & Fitriani, 2018) asserts that the character formation of young children results from the interaction of the family, the school, and the

community, which complement one another. Parenting, although important, therefore needs to be understood as one part of a broader ecosystem in the formation of noble character in early childhood.

Parents are the first environment to provide moral education through role modeling, habituation, advice, and supervision. The research by Risnawati et al. shows that parenting style is related to the development of early childhood moral character, such as honesty, responsibility, religiosity, discipline, and empathy, and that consistent parenting, a good example, supervision of technology use, and cooperation between fathers and mothers support it (Risnawati et al., 2024). The Islamic education framework in Indonesia likewise views moral growth in early childhood as a process of habituation and direct experience within the family, the school, and the community, in which concrete role models are essential because children tend to imitate what they see and hear, and values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, politeness, and care are instilled gradually through daily routines carried out consistently (*istiqamah*) (Khadijah, 2025). Recent empirical studies point in the same direction: (Wuryaningsih & Prasetyo, 2022) found that parental role modeling has a strong association with the development of moral values in early childhood, and (Dhiu et al., 2023) underscored that appropriate parenting strategies, through habituation, communication, and concrete examples at home, are an important foundation for building children's character.

Several studies published in Jurnal Raudhah have also addressed related themes in early childhood, such as the effect of storytelling about the Prophets on moral development (Purba, 2021), factors influencing learning discipline (Maisarah, & Gustina, 2018), social emotional development (Fitriya, A., Indriani, I., & Noor, 2022), teachers' approaches to developing gross motor skills (Faridy, F., Fitri, M., & Fikri, 2024), and the cultivation of discipline and independence through the Montessori method (Nasution, 2017). These studies confirm that parenting and the formation of character and moral development is a theme that continues to develop within Islamic Early Childhood Education (PIAUD) research, including in the journal used as a reference for this study.

Other studies have highlighted the importance of parents' communication patterns and discipline (Kristiani, R., Lunanta, L. P., & Ardani, 2021), the synergy between ECE

institutions and parents through parenting programs (Latif, M. A., Amir, R., Marzuki, K., Gaffar, F., & Nurhayati, 2023), and enjoyable learning approaches such as storytelling for strengthening young children's moral values (Rakimahwati, 2012), which reinforces the relevance of family–school synergy addressed in this study.

These previous studies can be grouped into three main streams, namely parenting and moral development in general (Hurlock & B, 1999; Wuryaningsih & Prasetyo, 2022), parenting and the formation of children's social character (Ambariani & Rakimahwati, 2023; Dhiu et al., 2023), and parenting from the perspective of Islamic education and religious character (Triputra, 2020; Mu'arifah et al., 2024). They consistently affirm the link between the quality of parenting and children's moral or character outcomes; however, most still use qualitative approaches or literature reviews, measure parenting through Baumrind's general typology, and view akhlak as a single concept without breaking it down into more specific relational dimensions. This study fills this gap by quantitatively measuring parenting through five dimensions of parenting practice (warmth, communication, supervision, discipline, and support) and the noble character of young children through five relational dimensions grounded in Islamic education (character toward Allah, oneself, parents and teachers, friends, and the environment), while statistically testing the association between the two at TK Negeri Satu Atap in Southeast Aceh Regency, a setting that has not been widely studied. The novelty of this study therefore lies not merely in the research location but in a more detailed measurement of noble character grounded in the values of Islamic Early Childhood Education (PIAUD).

This study therefore analyzes the relationship between parenting and the development of noble character in early childhood at TK Negeri Satu Atap, Southeast Aceh Regency, and is expected to provide empirical input for parents, teachers, and schools in improving the quality of parenting and the formation of noble character. The research question is whether there is a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. Accordingly,  $H_1$  states that there is a positive and significant relationship between parenting and the development of noble character in early childhood, whereas  $H_0$  states that there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

## B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design to determine the relationship between parenting and the development of noble character in early childhood. The correlational design was chosen because the study was not intended to test cause and effect but to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables (Sutja, 2017). The study was conducted at TK Negeri Satu Atap, Southeast Aceh Regency, on 15 June 2026. The population consisted of 30 parents, each with one early childhood child enrolled at TK Negeri Satu Atap, so that each respondent represented one child as the unit of analysis. Because the population was relatively small, all members of the population were used as the sample through total sampling (saturated sampling).

The study was carried out in several stages: developing the instrument based on theoretical review, requesting research permission from the school, obtaining informed consent from parents, distributing the questionnaire to 30 respondents, testing the validity and reliability of the instrument, and analyzing the data using SPSS. Data were collected using a questionnaire, with parenting as the independent variable (X) and the development of noble character in early childhood as the dependent variable (Y), and a documentation study as supporting data.

The parenting instrument was developed on five dimensions, namely warmth, communication, supervision, discipline, and support, as an operational elaboration of Baumrind's (1966) two dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness: warmth and support reflect responsiveness, supervision and discipline reflect demandingness, and communication links the two in daily parent–child interaction. Example items (in English translation of the original Indonesian questionnaire) are "I show affection to my child every day" (warmth), "I listen to my child's opinions when he or she speaks" (communication), "I know the activities my child does every day" (supervision), "I set rules that my child must obey" (discipline), and "I give praise when my child does something good" (support).

The instrument for the development of children's noble character was based on Al-Ghazali's concept of moral education as explained in Bahri (2022), covering five dimensions, namely character toward Allah, oneself, parents and teachers, friends, and the environment. Each dimension was translated into concrete behavioral indicators that parents can observe

in children aged 5–6 years, for example "My child is accustomed to praying before doing activities" (toward Allah), "My child tells the truth when asked about an event" (toward oneself), "My child speaks politely to parents" (toward parents and teachers), "My child is willing to share toys with friends" (toward friends), and "My child throws trash in its place" (toward the environment). All items in both instruments were measured using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, scored 5 to 1).

**Table 1. Research Instrument Grid**

| No                                            | Aspects / Indicators                  | Point No. | Number of Items |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Parenting (X)</b>                          |                                       |           |                 |
| 1                                             | Warmth                                | X2, X3    | 2               |
| 2                                             | Communication                         | X4–X6     | 3               |
| 3                                             | Supervision                           | X7–X9     | 3               |
| 4                                             | Discipline                            | X10–X12   | 3               |
| 5                                             | Support                               | X13–X15   | 3               |
| <b>Amount</b>                                 |                                       |           | <b>14</b>       |
| <b>Noble Character in Early Childhood (Y)</b> |                                       |           |                 |
| 1                                             | Character toward Allah                | Y1–Y3     | 3               |
| 2                                             | Character toward Oneself              | Y4–Y6     | 3               |
| 3                                             | Character toward Parents and Teachers | Y7–Y9     | 3               |
| 4                                             | Character toward Friends              | Y10–Y12   | 3               |
| 5                                             | Character toward the Environment      | Y13–Y15   | 3               |
| <b>Amount</b>                                 |                                       |           | <b>15</b>       |

This study obtained permission from TK Negeri Satu Atap Lawe Sekerah, as stated in Certificate Letter Number 421/001/TK-SA/2026. Before completing the questionnaire, parents were given an explanation of the research objectives and asked to sign an informed consent form, and the confidentiality of parents' and children's identities was maintained by using respondent codes and restricting data access to the researchers.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Findings

Instrument validity was tested using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation value, with an item eligibility criterion of a correlation coefficient  $\geq 0.30$ . Of the 15 parenting items, one did not meet the criterion and was deleted, whereas all 15 items on the noble character

variable were declared valid. Further data processing therefore used 14 parenting items and 15 noble character items (Table 2).

**Table 2. Validity Test Results ( $r_{table} = 0.361$ )**

| Item X | r calculated | Item Y | r Calculated |
|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|
| X2     | .459*        | Y1     | .404*        |
| X3     | .733**       | Y2     | .474**       |
| X4     | .628**       | Y3     | .581**       |
| X5     | .486**       | Y4     | .467**       |
| X6     | .382*        | Y5     | .524**       |
| X7     | .592**       | Y6     | .438*        |
| X8     | .557**       | Y7     | .456*        |
| X9     | .474**       | Y8     | .653**       |
| X10    | .638**       | Y9     | .511**       |
| X11    | .694**       | Y10    | .599**       |
| X12    | .671**       | Y11    | .504**       |
| X13    | .549**       | Y12    | .695**       |
| X14    | .420*        | Y13    | .682**       |
| X15    | .398*        | Y14    | .459*        |
|        |              | Y15    | .753**       |

Table 2 shows that all retained items met the validity criterion ( $r_{table} = 0.361$ ). Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha: the parenting instrument obtained a value of 0.828 (14 items) and the children's noble character instrument 0.834 (15 items), both above 0.60 and therefore declared reliable. Given the limited number of respondents, the instrument was tested using a single-measurement (one-shot) design.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables**

|                                                   | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Parenting                                         | 30 | 24      | 55      | 41.80 | 9.204          |
| Development of Noble Character in Early Childhood | 30 | 28      | 62      | 46.33 | 10.025         |

**Prerequisite Tests: Normality and Linearity**

Before hypothesis testing, normality and linearity tests were conducted as analytical prerequisites. The Shapiro-Wilk test showed significance values of 0.059 for parenting and 0.066 for the development of noble character, both greater than 0.05, so the data on both variables were declared normally distributed. The linearity test showed a significance value for Deviation from Linearity of 0.511 (well above 0.05), indicating no significant deviation from a linear relationship, so the linearity assumption was met for the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test. The significance value for Linearity of 0.056 was slightly above the 0.05 threshold, so the pure linear component is at the marginal level of significance.

**Table 4. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test Results**

|                                                   | Parenting                 | Development of Noble Character in Early Childhood |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Parenting                                         | Pearson Correlation 1     | 0.371                                             |
|                                                   | Sig. (2-tailed)           | 0.044                                             |
|                                                   | N 30                      | 30                                                |
| Development of Noble Character in Early Childhood | Pearson Correlation 0.371 | 1                                                 |
|                                                   | Sig. (2-tailed)           | 0.044                                             |
|                                                   | N 30                      | 30                                                |

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis (Table 4) produced a correlation coefficient of 0.371 with a two-tailed significance (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.044. Because this value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, which means there is a positive relationship between parenting and the development of noble character in early childhood. Statistical significance does not necessarily indicate a strong relationship, however: based on the guidelines for interpreting

correlation coefficients, a value of 0.371 falls into the low category, indicating a consistent tendency of association whose strength is limited. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of 0.138 indicates that approximately 13.8% of the variation in children's noble character development is shared with the variation in parenting. This is not evidence that parenting causes 13.8% of children's moral development; it is merely the proportion of shared variance, and the remaining 86.2% is related to other factors outside the variables examined in this study.

## 2. DISCUSSION

The results show that parenting has a positive relationship with the development of noble character in early childhood, although the strength of the relationship is low. This can be understood through three parenting mechanisms reflected in the five dimensions of the research instrument. Warmth and support are related to modeling, in which children learn to behave well by observing and imitating the affection that parents show every day. Discipline and supervision are related to habituation, namely the consistent application of rules and monitoring of behavior that gradually form good behavioral habits. Communication conveys advice and verbal reinforcement, helping children understand good and bad values through dialogue rather than merely one-way instruction. These three mechanisms, namely modeling, habituation, and communication, complement one another in supporting the formation of noble character.

This finding is consistent with previous studies showing the role of parenting in shaping children's moral character and religious behavior through the habituation of positive behaviors such as politeness, the performance of worship, honesty, and respect for others (Nurhayati et al., 2020; Triputra, 2020; Mu'arifah et al., 2024). Research (Ardiati, 2018) also affirms that parenting, role modeling, and habituation applied from an early age play a central role in shaping children's personality, while the study (Ambariani & Rakimahwati, 2023) shows that the family is the first and foremost place for character cultivation before children interact with the school and community. The similar direction of these findings strengthens the argument that consistent parenting at home is one important foundation, although not the only factor, in the formation of noble character in early childhood.

Given the low strength of the relationship, efforts to strengthen children's moral character cannot rely on family parenting alone but require synergy between family and school. The concept of parent involvement or parent–school partnership thus becomes relevant: through continuous teacher–parent communication, moral values habituated at school can be consistently reinforced in the home environment, so that children obtain aligned value-learning experiences in both settings. Developing children's noble character is therefore not only the responsibility of educational institutions but also requires the active involvement of parents.

The low strength of the relationship also indicates that the development of noble character is influenced by factors beyond parenting, including teachers' role modeling, school culture and climate, peer interaction, religious practices in the family, the wider social environment, and the child's individual characteristics, such as temperament and stage of cognitive-moral development. The formation of noble character in early childhood thus results from the interaction of various complementary factors, with parenting as one important foundation, not the sole determinant.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the correlational design cannot establish cause and effect. Second, the sample was limited to 30 respondents from one institution (TK Negeri Satu Atap), so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other locations or contexts. Third, both variables were reported by the same respondents (parents) through self-report questionnaires, so common-method bias and self-perception bias are possible, as discussed by (Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, 2003) and (Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, 2012); in addition, parents' recollections may not capture children's behavior as objectively as direct observation by independent parties such as teachers or researchers.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this research obtained several conclusions, namely: (1) there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between parenting and the development of noble character in early childhood at TK Negeri Satu Atap ( $r = 0.371$ ;  $p = 0.044 < 0.05$ ), so the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected; (2) the relationship falls into the low category, with parenting sharing approximately 13.8% of its variance with the development of noble character, so parenting is not the only factor but one of several interacting factors; and (3) better parenting as reported by parents tends to be accompanied by better development of children's noble character. Thus, the following suggestions are made: (1) parents should strengthen concrete role modeling, consistent habituation and supervision of behavior, and two-way communication with their children; (2) schools should establish routine communication with parents, for example through regular meetings or teacher–parent liaison notes, so that the habituation of moral values at school is reinforced at home; and (3) future researchers should expand the sample across several early childhood education institutions, use independent data sources such as direct observation or teacher assessments to reduce common-method bias, and examine other variables such as teachers' role modeling, school culture, peer interaction, and family religious practices.

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