

Parenting Styles and Their Association with Developmental Outcomes in Preschool-Aged Children

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ABSTRACT

Background: Children's growth encompasses stable changes in organ function, from cellular levels to overall bodily development, as well as increases in physical activity, skills, and cognitive processes. Parents' parenting styles significantly influence their child's future development. **Objective:** This study aims to identify the parenting styles employed by parents concerning motor development, language acquisition, and independence in preschool children at Azzamil School in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. **Methods:** A correlational descriptive research design with a cross-sectional approach was utilized. The sample comprised 116 preschool children aged 36 to 60 months and their mothers, selected through a total population sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire designed to assess parenting styles and a Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire to evaluate child development. Bivariate data analysis was conducted using the chi-square test. **Results:** The findings revealed that 87 participants (75%) exhibited democratic parenting styles, while 89 participants (76.7%) demonstrated age-appropriate child development. The statistical analysis yielded a p-value of <0.001, indicating a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$), with a prevalence ratio (PR) of 8.854 and a 95% confidence interval (CI) of 3.398-23.074. **Conclusion:** This study concludes that there is a significant relationship between parenting styles and child development. It is recommended that parents utilize nurturing approaches that foster and enhance their children's development through participation in parenting classes.

Keywords: Child Development, Parenting Style, Preschool Children

INTRODUCTION

The early childhood period, specifically ages 3 to 6 years, represents a critical stage of development in a child's life. During this phase, children undergo significant growth in cognitive, social, emotional, and moral domains (Norfitri, 2021). Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping a child's character and readiness to engage with broader social and educational environments (Wang *et al.*, 2022). The parenting style employed by caregivers significantly influences children's social and emotional development, which, in turn, affects their academic success and social interactions later in life (Alagla, Al-Husseyen and Alhawaish, 2021); (Francesconi and Heckman, 2016); (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

Parenting can be categorized into four primary types: authoritarian, permissive, authoritative, and neglectful

(indifferent) parenting (Frosch, Schoppe-Sullivan and O'Banion, 2021); (Norfitri, 2021). Authoritarian parenting is characterized by strict control and limited communication, often resulting in children who are obedient but lack initiative and creativity. In contrast, permissive parenting grants children complete freedom without clear boundaries, which can lead to issues with discipline and self-control. Authoritative parenting, however, strikes a balance between discipline and warmth, fostering independence and strong social skills in children (Ritonga and Hasibuan, 2023). Neglectful parenting is associated with children feeling undervalued and struggling with social adaptation (Prime *et al.*, 2023).

Several studies have shown that the parenting pattern applied within the family is influenced by various factors, such as the educational background of the parents, economic conditions, culture, and

their own childhood experiences (Adam and Awali, 2023). Parents with higher levels of education tend to implement authoritative parenting because they better understand the importance of communication and positive stimulation in children's development (Adam and Awali, 2023). Conversely, less stable economic conditions can encourage parents to adopt more authoritarian parenting patterns or even neglect due to the psychosocial pressures they face (Fono and Efrida Ita, 2022); (Adam and Awali, 2023).

The parenting pattern applied by parents also affects the social-emotional development of children. Children raised with authoritative parenting tend to be more confident, have good self-control, and are able to adapt to various social situations (Windayani and Putra, 2021). On the other hand, authoritarian parenting often makes children less expressive and afraid to make their own decisions. Meanwhile, children who grow up in permissive parenting often have difficulty regulating emotions and understanding social boundaries, while children with neglectful parenting are more prone to behavioral problems and difficulties in establishing social relationships (Prime *et al.*, 2023); (Windayani and Putra, 2021).

It is estimated that approximately 5-10% of children experience developmental delays; however, the exact causes of these delays remain uncertain. Additionally, around 1-3% of children under the age of five in Indonesia are believed to face general developmental delays, affecting motor skills, language, social-emotional development, and cognitive abilities (Gunardi *et al.*, 2019).

Parenting plays a very important role in the development of preschool children, especially in the aspects of motor skills, language, and independence. The right parenting style will help children achieve optimal growth and development according to their age. In the context of health promotion, parents' understanding of good parenting can improve children's physical, psychological, and social well-being (Adam and Awali, 2023).

In early childhood education, teachers and the school environment play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of suboptimal parenting patterns at home. Effective collaboration between parents and educators in recognizing children's needs and providing appropriate

stimulation can foster a supportive atmosphere for social and emotional development during childhood (Alagla, Al-Hussyeen and Alhowaish, 2021); (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, there is a pressing need to educate parents about the significance of effective parenting and its long-term impact on children's development.

Parents need to understand the stages of children's development and provide appropriate attention and stimulation so that their growth and development can proceed optimally. The way parents care for their children will influence how children think within their social environment. Therefore, it is important to choose an appropriate parenting style.

The selection of Azzamil School as the research location was based on several considerations relevant to the objectives of this study. Azzamil School is one of the early childhood education institutions that actively implements a holistic approach in the teaching and learning process and places special emphasis on parental involvement in child development. This school also has a fairly representative number of preschool-aged students, with diverse parental backgrounds, both in terms of education and the parenting patterns applied at home.

In addition, Azzamil School is known to be receptive to research activities and has a fairly structured system for documenting child development, making it easier for researchers to obtain accurate data. The school has also indirectly implemented the principles of health promotion in children's daily activities, such as fostering habits of living a clean and healthy life, encouraging regular communal meals, and involving parents in children's health education. This adds value to the study, especially in linking the findings to the importance of health promotion in supporting preschool children's development.

This research aims to provide valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in formulating more effective educational and parenting strategies that promote optimal child development. By identifying the most beneficial parenting styles, it is hoped that children will grow into independent, confident individuals with strong social skills.

METHODS

This study employs a correlational descriptive design with a cross-sectional approach. It was conducted at Azzamil School in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, encompassing four schools located in Pekalongan Regency and Pekalongan City. The school routinely assesses children's development using the Denver Development Screening Test (DDST) at the end of each semester. The study population consisted of all preschool children aged 36 to 60 months and their mothers. Data were collected from April to May 2023. A total of 116 respondents were selected using a total population sampling technique, also known as saturated sampling. Inclusion criteria for participants included mothers and children who were willing to participate, cooperative during the research, and physically healthy. Conversely, mothers or children with mental disorders or those experiencing illnesses that could interfere with developmental assessments were excluded from the study. Child development data were obtained from secondary DDST records available in the school, while parenting style data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to the mothers.

In this study, parenting style was the independent variable, while the child's development was the dependent variable. The inclusion criteria included children who were physically healthy and had no mental disorders or serious illnesses that could interfere with the results of the developmental screening. Children with mental retardation, congenital anomalies, or whose mothers refused to participate were excluded from the study.

Total sampling was applied in this study. A total of 148 DDST reports were eligible for inclusion. Based on the DDST report data, 148 parenting style questionnaires were distributed to the mothers. After two weeks of distribution, a total of 116 questionnaires were collected, resulting in a response rate of 78.37%.

The data collection tools included a parenting style questionnaire, which had been tested for validity and reliability (with a correlation coefficient $r > 0.444$), and a Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire to assess children's

development. The latter is a standardized questionnaire from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. The child development assessment was conducted according to the child's developmental age, ranging from 36 to 60 months, using this standardized questionnaire (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024); Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2022).

The parenting questionnaire consists of 20 questions, divided into the Relationship aspect and the Guidance aspect. Each question has four possible response options, with the answer values assigned as follows: always = 4, often = 3, rarely = 2, and never = 1. The assessment results are then categorized into four parenting styles: authoritarian, democratic, permissive, and uninvolved.

After completing the questionnaire, the scores for the Relationship questions (numbers 3, 7, 11, 15, 19) and the Guidance questions (numbers 4, 8, 12, 16, 20) are summed separately. To determine the parenting pattern, the intersection point between the guidance score and the relationship score is identified. This intersection indicates the parenting style adopted by the mother in relation to her child (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024); Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2022).

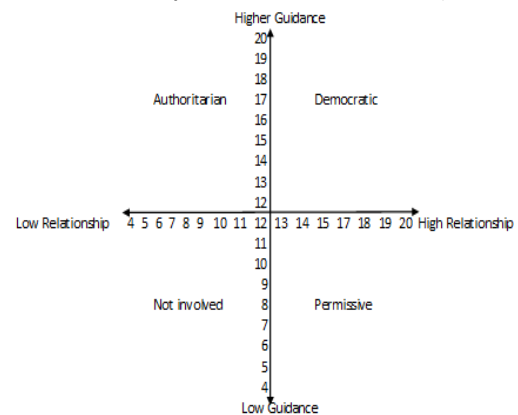


Figure 1. Determination of parenting based on the results of the calculation of relationship and guidance scores

The researcher initially conducted an interview with the manager of Azzamil School, who indicated that developmental assessments had never been performed using a Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire. Following this, the researcher submitted the study for ethical review and received approval from the Health Research Ethics Commission at the University of Pekalongan (Approval No. 181/B.02.01/KEPK/XI/2022). After

obtaining the necessary research permissions, the researcher identified the respondents and provided them with informed consent.

The collected data were processed and analyzed using univariate analysis to describe the characteristics of respondents, parenting styles, and developmental outcomes, which were presented in frequency distributions. Bivariate analysis, specifically the chi-square test, was employed to evaluate the relationship between parenting styles and child development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 indicates that the average age of the mothers participating in the study is 29 years, while the average age of the children assessed for developmental outcomes is 45 months. A significant portion of the mothers, 53 (45.7%), have completed their high school education. Additionally, the majority of the mothers are not employed, totaling 83 (71.6%).

Table 2 shows that the most common parenting style among mothers is democratic, with 87 participants (75%) adopting this approach. Furthermore, the majority of children, 89 (76.7%), demonstrate developmental outcomes appropriate for their age.

Table 1. Participant Characteristic (n=116)

Characteristic	n(%)
Mother's Age (Years)	
<29 th	58 (50)
≥29 th	58 (50)
Education:	
Primary school	11 (9.5)
Junior high school	23 (19.8)
High school	53 (45.7)
College	29 (25.0)
Working Status	
Work	33 (28.4)
Not working	83 (71.6)

Table 2. Frequency distribution of parenting and child development (n= 116)

Variable	n(%)
Parenting	
Authoritarian	7 (6.0)
Permissive	17 (14.7)
Democratic	87 (75.0)
Not involved	5 (4.3)
Child Development	
Diverge	7 (6.0)
Doubt	20 (17.2)
Compliant/Normal	89 (76.7)

Table 3. Results of Bivariate Analysis of Maternal Characteristics and Toddler Development with Parenting Patterns

Variabel	Parenting Patterns								p-value	PR	CI 95% (lower-Upper)		
	Authorit arian		Permissi ve		Democratic		Not involved					total (%)	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)					
Mother's Age													
<29 th	5	(4.3)	8	(6.9)	44	(37.9)	1	(0.9)	58	(50.0)	0.368	0.912	0.393-2.115
≥29 th	2	(1.7)	9	(7.8)	43	(37.1)	4	(3.4)	58	(50.0)			
Education													
Primary school	1	(0.9)	1	(0.9)	9	(7.8)	0	(0)	11	(9.5)			
Junior high school	1	(0.9)	2	(1.70)	18	(15.5)	2	(1.7)	23	(19.8)	0.517	0.747	0.284-1.962
High school	3	(2.6)	9	(7.8)	41	(35.3)	0	(0)	53	(45.7)			
College	2	(1.7)	5	(4.3)	19	(16.4)	3	(2.6)	29	(25.0)			
Working Status													
Not Working	2	(1.7)	13	(11.2)	67	(57.8)	1	(0.9)	83	(71.6)	0.002	1.367	0.151-0.891
Work	5	(4.3)	4	(3.4)	20	(17.2)	4	(3.4)	33	(28.4)			
Child Development													
Diverge	2	(1.70)	1	(0.90)	2	(1.70)	1	(0.90)	7	(5.17)	<0.001	8.854	3.398-23.074
Doubt	3	(2.60)	6	(5.20)	9	(7.80)	2	(1.70)	20	(17.24)			
Appropriate	3	(1.70)	10	(8.60)	75	(64.70)	2	(1.70)	90	(77.57)			

During data processing, a chi-square test for a 4x3 table was conducted. However, the presence of expected values less than 5 necessitated the use of an

alternative chi-square test, which involved adjusting the data before reapplying the analysis. The results are presented in Table 3. The findings indicate that among

children with a democratic parenting style, 75 respondents (64.7%) exhibit appropriate development. Statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between parenting style and various aspects of child development, including motor skills, language, and independence, as demonstrated by a p-value of less than 0.001.

The characteristics of respondents encompass various aspects of their identity and status, which are critical for research analysis (Velina Okta, 2022). In this study, the mothers had an average age exceeding 29.22 years. Early adulthood, typically spanning from ages 20 to 30 years, is a period of self-adjustment and personal development. During this phase, individuals begin to realize their potential, achieve independence, establish marital relationships, start families, and cultivate close friendships (Dwilianto, Alwi Usman Matondang and Linda Yarni, 2024). Those in this developmental stage generally exhibit increased maturity in their thinking and behavior, enabling them to have a significant influence on how they educate and nurture their children. Appropriate parenting strategies can enhance children's chances of developing in accordance with their growth and developmental milestones (Shaud and Asad, 2020).

This aligns with Wong's findings (Lengkong, 2022); (Ningsih, 2022), which indicate that age significantly influences parents' ability to fulfill their parenting roles. Being too young or too old can impede effective parenting, as this role requires a balance of physical strength and stable psychosocial conditions for optimal execution. To successfully assume parenting responsibilities, parents need to be in good physical health and possess robust psychosocial well-being (Djufri, Posangi and Oroh, 2019).

In addition to age, Table 3 shows that the level of parental education also impacts the parenting styles employed. The study found that 53 mothers (45.7%) had completed high school, signifying the completion of nine years of compulsory education. Research has shown that education serves as a process through which the environment shapes individuals, leading to lasting changes in behavior patterns, thought processes, and attitudes (Aniza, Fadillah and Amalia, 2021); (Lariwu, Rottie and Corneles, 2019); (Lengkong, 2022). Furthermore, a higher

level of education enhances parents' knowledge regarding child care, ultimately influencing their preparedness to provide effective parenting (Andriyani and Ersila, 2024); (Ersila, Prafitri and Sabita, 2021).

The results of this study, as shown in Table 3, indicate that the majority of mothers, 83 (71.6%), do not work outside the home, which allows them to spend more time with their children compared to their working counterparts. Non-working mothers have greater opportunities to provide full care and guidance in fostering their children's independence than those who are employed (Nursa'iidah, no date). However, this perspective contrasts with findings by (Mahmudin, 2024), who emphasize that parental employment is a crucial source of family income, essential for meeting physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Stable employment can enhance family welfare, thereby facilitating an optimal childcare process. The effectiveness of parenting often hinges on how well parents balance work obligations with opportunities to engage with their children (Zuliyanti and Setiawati, 2019).

A mother who works outside the home can also influence her child's parenting. Working mothers may have less full-time availability for their children, which often leads children to solve problems independently. Children's wishes are more frequently fulfilled, and they may have the freedom to engage in activities without restriction. Conversely, mothers who do not work often spend more time assisting with children's activities at home. These parents tend to protect their children and may impose restrictions, which can make children less capable of solving problems on their own.

Research by (Mahmudin, 2024) states that children with working mothers tend to have less optimal character or personality development, in contrast to children cared for by non-working mothers who often show better development. These children respond quickly, are intelligent, and get along well with others. The study also found that most parents, whether working or not, tend to adopt democratic parenting styles. This parenting pattern enables children to develop self-control and behave in ways that are acceptable to society. It encourages children to be independent, responsible, and confident. Additionally,

their creativity develops well because parents often stimulate their children to take the initiative.

Various parenting approaches can be applied, each exerting distinct influences on children's behavior. The implementation of different parenting styles can lead to unique outcomes in children's behavioral development (Ersila *et al.*, 2023). The motor development of preschool children is greatly influenced by the stimulation provided by parents (Nuraenah & Futriani, 2023). Supportive parenting—such as providing opportunities for active play, practicing fine and gross motor skills, and creating a safe environment—can accelerate children's motor development (Patompo, 2023). Conversely, parenting styles that are overly protective may hinder children's exploration, resulting in slower motor development (Ilham, 2022). Health promotion in this area can be achieved by educating parents about the importance of physical activity and providing appropriate stimulation according to the child's age (Lariwu, Rottie and Corneles, 2019).

Frequent and meaningful verbal interactions between parents and children significantly impact the language development of preschoolers (Fono and Efrida Ita, 2022). Democratic parenting, characterized by two-way communication that encourages children to speak and express their thoughts, has been linked to enhanced language development (Haryanto *et al.*, 2024). In contrast, authoritarian or permissive parenting styles that lack verbal stimulation may contribute to speech delays in children (Ilham, 2022). In the context of health promotion, it is crucial to educate parents on effective communication strategies with their children. Activities such as reading books, singing, and encouraging discussions can greatly enhance children's language development.

The independence of preschool children is greatly influenced by the parenting styles employed by their parents. Parenting that promotes independence—such as allowing children to participate in daily activities like self-feeding, dressing themselves, or putting away toys—helps children develop greater confidence and autonomy (Lengkong, 2022). Conversely, overly restrictive or excessively helpful parenting can hinder the growth of a child's independence.

Health promotion initiatives can support this aspect by teaching parents strategies to gradually cultivate their children's independence in a manner that aligns with their age and abilities (Ningsih, 2022).

Parents who use a permissive style often focus on maintaining a strong relationship with their child, providing ample positive support; however, their methods can be inconsistent, characterized by excessive praise and minimal supervision. They may allow children to act freely without much guidance and rarely intervene in potentially dangerous situations. On the other hand, parents who adopt an authoritarian style typically provide limited emotional support and enforce strict rules. According to (Adam and Awali, 2023), these parents exert dominant control, impose rigid discipline, and lack the necessary emotional backing for healthy child development.

The results of the study indicate that the majority of respondents employed a democratic parenting style. This approach is considered the most effective for shaping children's character, as it fosters openness, respect, and an understanding of the child's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, children raised in this environment are more likely to develop into mature, friendly, and adaptable individuals. Research suggests that democratic parenting promotes optimal development in motor skills, language acquisition, and independence (Windayani and Putra, 2021).

In this study, parents who practiced democratic parenting were associated with children whose developmental progress closely aligned with their chronological age. Conversely, parents who did not engage in this style—particularly mothers—often lacked the guidance necessary for children to recognize their potential. These parents tended to provide insufficient support and encouragement for children to tackle new challenges. As noted by (Norfitri, 2021), this parenting style can sometimes lack the necessary parental control, with a greater focus on fulfilling immediate needs, such as food and toys, rather than addressing long-term considerations like homework expectations and behavioral standards (Nadia, Wiji and Rahayu, 2022).

Each parenting style offers distinct advantages and limitations. While parents

may primarily adopt a democratic approach, circumstances may necessitate a more authoritarian style, tailored to the child's needs at a particular moment. For instance, in situations demanding strict discipline, parents might enforce clearer boundaries to help children understand limitations. Conversely, in a more relaxed and open environment, democratic parenting fosters independent thinking and encourages children to express their opinions. By navigating these approaches thoughtfully, parents can create a nurturing environment that supports optimal child development.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study demonstrates a significant relationship between parenting styles and children's motor development, language acquisition, and independence. Future research should explore the specific impacts of various parenting approaches on these developmental aspects, with a focus on identifying which styles best promote optimal growth. Additionally, consideration should be given to supporting factors such as the home environment and early stimulation. The findings are intended to provide valuable insights for parents, educators, and healthcare professionals regarding the importance of implementing appropriate parenting styles to foster children's optimal growth and development. Furthermore, this research can serve as a foundation for designing early childhood health promotion programs aimed at enhancing positive parenting practices within families. By increasing awareness of the connection between parenting and preschool development, we hope to empower communities to play a vital role in nurturing healthy, independent, and skillful future generations from an early age.

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