

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN PARENTING STYLES AND CHILD CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN HOUSEHOLDS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of parents in shaping parenting styles and children's character within households in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, Meuraxa Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City. The primary issue explored is the importance of parental involvement in child-rearing, which significantly influences the development of a child's character. The research aims to understand how parents implement a democratic parenting style and how their attitudes support the moral intelligence of their children within the family environment. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, using data collection techniques such as observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research informants consisted of parents residing in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe. The findings indicate that parents who apply a democratic parenting style tend to raise children who are responsible, respectful, and socially adaptable. However, several challenges remain, including limited time availability, lack of awareness about appropriate parenting methods, and the negative influence of external environments and social media. Therefore, it is essential to enhance parents' knowledge and understanding of the importance of positive parenting in promoting optimal character development in children.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the first social institution known to a child and serves as the primary foundation for the development of personality and character. Within the family, parents play the role of the first and foremost educators for their children (Daradjat, 2011). The role of parents is not limited to fulfilling physical needs but also encompasses psychological, social, and moral aspects of the child. Therefore, the parenting style adopted by parents significantly influences the direction of a child's development, including emotional intelligence, discipline, morality, and social responsibility (Yusuf, 2011).

There are several types of parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, and democratic. Authoritarian parenting tends to be rigid, demanding obedience without room for discussion; permissive parenting offers freedom without clear boundaries; while democratic parenting provides a balance between freedom and control and encourages

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open communication between parents and children (Djamarah, 2014). Research has shown that democratic parenting has the most positive impact on a child's character development as it allows children to grow in a supportive, loving, yet disciplined environment (Apriyadi & Sudarto, 2020).

In Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, Meuraxa Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City, researchers have found that there are still parents who lack an understanding of the importance of proper parenting in character development. Many parents apply inconsistent parenting styles, leaning towards either authoritarian or permissive approaches, and fail to provide adequate emotional support and role modeling. Children who do not receive sufficient attention and guidance from their parents tend to show behavioral symptoms such as low self-confidence, irritability, rudeness, and a lack of discipline both socially and academically. This issue forms the essential background for conducting this study.

This research aims to address two main problems: (1) how parents implement democratic parenting styles in character formation within the household environment in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe; and (2) how parents' attitudes contribute to the development of their children's moral intelligence within the community setting. Based on these problem statements, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the parents' role in applying democratic parenting and their attitudes in supporting the development of their children's character and morals.

The theoretical framework of this research refers to social role theory, which states that individuals possess a set of expected behaviors based on their social status (Ismanto, 2022). In the family context, the role of parents is a crucial instrument in the child's socialization process. Additionally, moral development theory by Piaget and Kohlberg explains that a child's moral development is influenced by ongoing social interactions and adult role modeling (Yusuf, 2011). This research also draws on the perspectives of Hakim (2018) and Aslam (2019), who emphasize that parental role modeling and emotional support are vital factors in shaping children's character and moral intelligence.

Previous studies, such as those by Apriyadi and Sudarto (2020), have shown that children raised under democratic parenting tend to be more open, responsible, and capable of solving problems independently. In contrast, children raised in permissive environments are often stubborn, disrespectful, and struggle with accepting social boundaries (Arumsari, 2020). Therefore, this study is expected to provide both practical and theoretical contributions toward improving parenting practices at the family and community levels. Thus, this research not only offers a theoretical understanding of the relationship between parenting styles and children's character development but also provides recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to develop more effective family education programs that are relevant to local socio-cultural values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to provide a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal of the role of parents in child-rearing and its influence on character development within the household environment. This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to understand social realities from the informants' perspectives and to capture the subjective meanings of their everyday

parenting experiences. Qualitative research is also well-suited for exploring complex and contextual phenomena, such as the dynamics of parent-child relationships within the local cultural context of Gampong Asoe Nanggroe.

The scope of this study covers parenting activities directed at elementary school-aged children, which reflect character values such as responsibility, honesty, discipline, and courtesy. The object of this research is the role of parents in applying democratic parenting styles and their attitudes in supporting the development of their children's moral intelligence. The study focuses on four dimensions: (1) parents' positive activities in guiding their children; (2) the formation of children's behavior in social and family contexts; (3) the provision of social support by parents; and (4) exemplary conduct in daily life.

The research is conducted in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, Meuraxa Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City—an urban area with a diverse population in terms of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. This location was chosen as it is considered representative for observing parenting practices in a dynamic urban society. The study was carried out from January to March 2025, encompassing stages of initial observation, data collection, verification, and analysis.

Data in this study were collected using several primary techniques:

1. In-depth interviews: Conducted directly with informants who are parents of elementary school-aged children residing in the research area. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow informants the freedom to express their experiences and views, while still adhering to the core research themes.
2. Participant observation: The researcher observed behaviors and interactions between parents and children in daily life, both at home and in nearby social environments such as places of worship or informal schools.
3. Documentation: This served as a complementary data source to the interviews and observations, including field notes, interview transcripts, photos of activities, and relevant family or informal educational records of the children.

The primary materials in this research consist of first-hand data obtained directly from informants. Tools used include: (1) Semi-structured interview guides, (2) Audio and video recording devices, (3) Documentation camera, (4) Field notebooks, and (5) Qualitative data coding templates. These instruments were designed to capture natural data and allow for cross-validation among sources (triangulation).

Operational Definitions of Variables

1. Parental Role

Refers to the entirety of actions carried out by parents in educating, guiding, and shaping their child's character. The indicators include:

- Positive activities (encouraging worship, structured learning, and play),
- Behavioral shaping (teaching responsibility, honesty, courtesy),
- Social support (providing emotional attention, reinforcing positive behaviors), and
- Exemplary conduct (serving as role models in daily speech and actions).

2. Child Character

Defined as attitudes, values, and habits embedded within the child that reflect a positive personality. Observed character traits include:

- Discipline,
- Honesty,
- Empathy,
- Social skills, and
- Courtesy.

This study uses thematic analysis, which includes the following steps:

1. Data Reduction

Raw field data are filtered to extract information relevant to the research focus. The data are organized into a thematic code matrix based on the indicators of parental roles and child character.

2. Data Presentation

Reduced data are arranged in narrative and visual forms (if necessary) to facilitate the drawing of conclusions. Presentation is structured according to emerging thematic findings from the field.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Preliminary conclusions are formed based on emerging patterns in the data. These conclusions are then re-verified using source triangulation (comparing interview, observation, and documentation results), member checking (confirming with informants), and audit trails by supervisors or peer reviewers.

With this approach, the validity and reliability of qualitative data are maintained through confirmation processes and transparency in data interpretation. The researcher also preserves objectivity by documenting self-reflections and positionality (reflexivity) throughout the fieldwork process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study provides an in-depth analysis of how parents contribute to shaping their children's character through democratic parenting, as well as how parental attitudes support the development of children's moral intelligence in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, Meuraxa Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, four interrelated key aspects of parental roles were identified, each significantly influencing character formation in children.

1. Positive Parenting Activities

The findings reveal that most parents in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe recognize the importance of actively engaging in their children's daily lives. Activities such as praying together, organizing structured time for study and play, and encouraging children to assist with household chores are used as means to instill responsibility and life values. Parents provide guidance without coercion and explain the reasons behind household rules. These positive activities reflect the implementation of democratic parenting, where children are given freedom accompanied by responsibility and supervision. According to Apriyadi and Sudarto (2020), democratic parenting fosters children's independence, responsibility, and

ability to make rational decisions. In this context, parental involvement goes beyond supervision – it positions parents as facilitators in the child's development process.

2. Formation of Behaviour and Social Attitudes

Children's behaviour within family and community settings is heavily influenced by their interactions with and guidance from parents. Children raised with democratic parenting tend to be more confident, polite in social interactions, and respectful. Parents provide not only verbal instructions but also tangible examples through daily actions such as greeting neighbours, helping others, and maintaining politeness in speech. These findings support the social learning theory, which posits that children learn by observing and imitating significant figures around them, particularly their parents (Bandura in Yusuf, 2011). Parents serve as behavioural models, and consistent reinforcement allows moral values and habits to take root. Djamarah (2014) emphasizes that the family is the first and most crucial social institution in shaping a child's personality and character.

However, the study also found that some children exhibited disrespectful attitudes, frequent anger, and a lack of responsibility. This is closely related to inconsistent parental involvement in shaping behaviour. Some parents tend to delegate parenting responsibilities to teachers or the community, weakening behavioural control. As a result, children's character development becomes suboptimal.

3. Parental Social and Emotional Support

A critical component of democratic parenting is emotional support. The findings indicate that parents who make time to listen to their children, understand their feelings, and provide encouragement during difficulties are able to build strong emotional bonds. Children who receive such support tend to be more open, less prone to stress, and better equipped to solve problems independently. Aslam (2019) argues that parental emotional and social support forms the psychological foundation of a child. Feeling accepted and valued as an individual helps children develop self-confidence and self-regulation. Conversely, a lack of emotional support can lead to negative behaviours such as withdrawal, dishonesty, or attention-seeking through aggression.

In this study, some parents admitted difficulty in providing emotional support due to work pressures and financial burdens. These constraints limit communication and emotional closeness with their children. This underscores the need for community or educational institutions to provide space and understanding to help parents strengthen communication and emotional ties with their children.

4. Parental Role Modelling in Daily Life

This research is grounded in a strong theoretical framework that explains the connection between parental roles and children's character formation. The independent variable – parental roles – consists of four key indicators: positive activities, communication patterns, social support, and role modelling. Meanwhile, the dependent variable – child character – is reflected in social behaviour, morality, responsibility, and politeness. These indicators are based on the belief that family interaction plays a fundamental role in a child's value internalization process. A child's behaviour and character do not emerge instantly; they are shaped through a socialization process

involving modelling, habituation, and consistent communication (Yusuf, 2011; Djamarah, 2014).

The theoretical framework is supported by three main approaches. First, role theory by Ismanto (2022) emphasizes that every individual, including parents, carries a set of behaviours expected from their social status. In this case, parents hold a central role as educators, guides, and moral compasses for their children. Second, parenting style theory by Djamarah (2014) highlights that parental styles – whether democratic, authoritarian, or permissive – greatly influence children’s behaviour, personality, and value formation. Democratic parenting is deemed most effective, as it balances control and affection. Third, the moral development theory by Yusuf (2011) states that children acquire moral values through social processes and direct learning, particularly through real-life examples set by parents.

In the context of Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, this theoretical framework is highly relevant, as the community remains strongly influenced by traditional, religious, and familial values. Parents are not only expected to meet their children's physical needs but also to shape their personalities in line with prevailing social and cultural norms. When parental roles are carried out optimally – through effective communication, shared positive activities, emotional support, and consistent role modelling – children’s character grows strong and stable. Thus, this framework not only serves as the conceptual foundation of the research but also offers practical guidance for understanding parenting dynamics in local communities (Ismanto, 2022; Djamarah, 2014; Yusuf, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in Gampong Asoe Nanggroe, Meuraxa Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City, it can be concluded that the role of parents plays a highly significant and strategic part in shaping parenting patterns that directly influence children's character development. The democratic parenting style, which served as the central focus of this study, has been proven to be the most effective approach in cultivating positive character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy in children. Parents who adopt a democratic parenting style tend to involve their children in decision-making processes, allow space for open dialogue, and provide guidance that is both affectionate and grounded in clear rules. This involvement is manifested not only through physical activities shared with their children – such as studying, playing, or worshipping together – but also through emotional support and daily role modeling. Children raised in such environments exhibit more stable behavior, interact positively within social settings, and demonstrate responsibility in carrying out their tasks and roles.

Furthermore, parental role modeling has emerged as the most influential factor in the internalization of moral values. Children tend to imitate their parents’ attitudes, behaviors, and even communication styles. In other words, children do not merely learn from what is verbally taught, but are more strongly shaped by what they observe and experience firsthand in daily life. Nevertheless, this study also identified several obstacles that hinder parents from fulfilling their roles optimally, such as limited time due to work obligations, economic pressures, and a lack of understanding regarding appropriate parenting approaches that align with children's developmental needs. These challenges have led to

inconsistencies in parenting practices, which in turn negatively affect character formation in children. The overall findings of this research reinforce social role theory, which posits that every individual within a society fulfills specific functions and responsibilities based on their social status. In the context of the family, parents serve as the primary actors in the process of character education. Therefore, the effectiveness of parenting greatly depends on the parents' awareness of their responsibilities, as well as their ability to foster a supportive, communicative, and exemplary home environment.

In conclusion, the formation of children's character cannot be separated from the active and consistent involvement of parents in educating and guiding them holistically. Parents are not merely protectors or providers of physical needs, but are the first moral and social educators who lay the foundation for their children's personality and future.

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