

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Physical Independence among Preschool Children Aged 3–5 Years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Independence is an individual's ability to regulate and manage themselves without relying on their parents. The development of children's personality, particularly their independence, is strongly influenced by the parenting style practiced within the family. Appropriate parenting can enhance children's independence, whereas inappropriate parenting may hinder its development. This study aimed to determine the relationship between parenting styles and the level of physical independence among preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. This study employed a quantitative correlational analytical design with a cross-sectional approach. Total sampling was used, involving 55 respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using the Chi-square test at a significance level of 0.05. Most respondents demonstrated good parenting, and 26 children (89.7%) were classified as physically independent. The Chi-square analysis yielded $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, with no cells having an expected count of zero. There was a significant relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Child Independence, Preschool Children.

I. Introduction

Preschool children are generally defined as children aged 3–5 years. This period represents an important stage of development because children experience substantial changes in their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social abilities. It is often described as a remarkable developmental period in which children demonstrate strong curiosity and become highly interested in particular objects, activities, and experiences. Their emotional responses may also change rapidly, ranging from excitement and enthusiasm to whining, tantrums, and affection. Such changes are a natural part of early childhood development and reflect children's continuing efforts to understand themselves and the environment around them. Preschool children frequently behave as explorers, scientists, artists, and researchers because they learn primarily through observation, experimentation, interaction, and direct experience. They enjoy learning and continually seek to understand how to make friends, interact with the surrounding world, and regulate their bodies, emotions, and thoughts (Mansyur, 2019).

One important aspect of development during the preschool period is the development of independence. Independence is an individual's ability to regulate and manage themselves without excessive

dependence on others, particularly parents or caregivers. The development of independence is important because it prepares children to perform daily activities, make simple decisions, solve problems, and gradually assume responsibility for themselves. Independence does not develop automatically but is influenced by various factors, particularly the environment in which children grow and interact. The family is one of the most important environments because children spend considerable time with their parents and frequently learn through parental examples, guidance, expectations, and responses to their behavior. Parents play an important role in shaping children's personalities and supporting their development. The family functions not only as a place where children receive care but also as the primary environment for education, socialization, discipline, and character formation. Parenting practices influence how children learn to respond to rules, express emotions, make decisions, and perform activities independently. Parents may apply different parenting styles according to their beliefs, experiences, expectations, and perceptions of their children's needs. Three parenting styles discussed in this study are democratic, permissive, and authoritarian parenting (Esti Pratiwi K et al., 2020).

Democratic parenting is characterized by parental guidance accompanied by opportunities for children to express their opinions and develop responsibility. Parents provide children with appropriate freedom while maintaining supervision and clear expectations. This approach can encourage children to learn to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions. In contrast, authoritarian parenting involves greater parental control over rules, actions, and responsibilities. Children are expected to obey parental decisions and may have limited opportunities to express disagreement or make independent choices. Permissive parenting, meanwhile, is characterized by substantial freedom for children and relatively limited parental control or supervision. Although freedom can provide children with opportunities to explore, excessive permissiveness may result in children engaging in behaviors that do not comply with established rules. Therefore, educating children requires various approaches, including modeling, habituation, attention, advice, and appropriate consequences or punishment (Esti Pratiwi K et al., 2020).

Independence among preschool children can generally be divided into psychological independence and physical independence. Psychological independence refers to a child's ability to solve problems, make decisions, and respond to situations independently. Physical independence, on the other hand, refers to the child's ability to perform activities related to personal care without assistance from other people. Physical independence is particularly important during the preschool period because children begin to develop the skills required to manage their daily needs. Indicators of independent behavior among preschool children include eating and drinking without assistance, using the toilet independently, and putting on their own shoes (Trianingsih, 2021). These abilities indicate that children are gradually developing confidence and competence in managing their own physical needs. The development of children's independence is closely related to the parenting practices they experience at home. A study conducted by Eka Pratiwi et al. (2023) demonstrated that different parenting styles were significantly associated with children's independence. Authoritarian parenting contributed 7.62% to children's independence, while democratic parenting contributed 14.08%. Permissive parenting contributed 12.50%, and the combined effect of the parenting styles contributed 34.2%. These findings indicate that parenting practices constitute an important factor in children's development of independence, although other factors may also contribute to this developmental outcome.

A preliminary study conducted by the researchers on August 8 at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta, identified 55 students aged 3–5 years. The preliminary study was conducted through interviews with four parents and the school principal. The information obtained from this preliminary assessment encouraged the researchers to examine the relationship between parenting styles and children's physical independence more systematically. Understanding this relationship is important because appropriate parenting may support children in developing the confidence and skills necessary to perform daily activities independently, while inappropriate parenting practices may hinder this development. Based on the developmental importance of independence and the role of parents in supporting children's growth, the researchers were interested in conducting a study entitled "The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Physical Independence among

Preschool Children Aged 3–5 Years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta.” The study is expected to provide information regarding the relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among preschool children and may contribute to a better understanding of parenting practices that support children's development of independence.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Parenting Styles

Parenting style refers to the patterns of treatment, interaction, guidance, and education that parents provide to their children in the family environment. Parenting is not limited to meeting children's basic physical needs but also includes the ways parents guide, educate, discipline, support, and train children to develop appropriate behaviors. According to Sunarty (2015), parenting style can be understood as the treatment provided by parents through caring, nurturing, teaching, educating, guiding, and training children. These practices are expressed through discipline, role modeling, affection, punishment, rewards, and parental leadership within the family. Therefore, parenting style represents a pattern of parental behavior that is reflected not only in what parents say but also in what they do when interacting with their children.

The family is an important environment in which children learn how to behave, communicate, follow rules, and gradually develop the ability to manage themselves. Through everyday interactions, parents provide examples that children may observe and imitate. The manner in which parents provide direction, respond to children's behavior, establish boundaries, and provide opportunities for children to act independently may influence the development of children's characteristics and behavior. Consequently, differences in parenting practices may result in differences in children's ability to respond to situations and perform activities independently. According to Sunariyadi and Andari (2021), parenting styles can be classified into three types: authoritarian, democratic, and permissive parenting. Each parenting style has different characteristics in terms of parental control, children's freedom, communication, and the role of parents in making decisions. Understanding these characteristics is important because the parenting style experienced by children may influence how they develop independence in their daily lives.

a. Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parenting is characterized by strong parental control and a high level of obedience expected from children. In this parenting style, parents tend to make most or almost all decisions for their children. Children are expected to follow parental instructions and comply with established rules. They may have limited opportunities to question, disagree with, or participate in decisions made by their parents. The relationship between parents and children therefore tends to emphasize obedience and compliance. In authoritarian parenting, parental authority becomes the primary basis for regulating children's behavior. Children are expected to submit to parental decisions, even when they may not fully understand the reasons behind those decisions. The source also illustrates this characteristic through a military context, in which children are expected not to challenge orders given by parents or commanders, regardless of whether the orders are considered right or wrong. This illustration emphasizes the strong emphasis on obedience and authority that characterizes authoritarian parenting (Sunariyadi & Andari, 2021). The strict control associated with authoritarian parenting may affect children's opportunities to make choices and practice independent behavior. When parents consistently determine what children should do and provide limited opportunities for children to express their opinions, children may have fewer opportunities to practice decision-making. Thus, authoritarian parenting emphasizes parental control and obedience rather than children's freedom to determine their own actions.

b. Democratic Parenting

Democratic parenting is characterized by a parenting approach that provides children with opportunities to express themselves and participate in determining aspects of their lives. This parenting style differs from authoritarian parenting because parents do not exercise absolute control over children's decisions. Instead, children are given opportunities to communicate their thoughts and preferences while remaining within the guidance provided by their parents. According to Sunariyadi and Andari (2021), democratic parenting allows children to express themselves and determine their own future. This means that parents provide children with space to develop their thoughts, preferences, and abilities. The relationship between parents and children therefore provides opportunities for communication and participation. Democratic parenting is particularly relevant to the development of independence because children are given opportunities to practice making choices. Through these opportunities, children can gradually learn to recognize their preferences, express their opinions, and take responsibility for their actions. In this context, parental guidance remains important because children's freedom is exercised within the family environment and under parental supervision. Democratic parenting therefore emphasizes a balance between children's opportunities to express themselves and the parents' role in providing direction and guidance.

c. Permissive Parenting

Permissive parenting is characterized by a high degree of freedom provided to children and limited parental control and attention. Parents who apply this style tend to allow children considerable freedom in determining their activities and behavior. Compared with authoritarian parenting, which places strong emphasis on parental control, permissive parenting provides substantially greater freedom to children. Sunariyadi and Andari (2021) explain that permissive parenting is characterized by parents giving children considerable freedom, with parental control and attention being very limited or even absent. This means that parents may provide children with opportunities to act according to their preferences without establishing sufficiently strong boundaries or supervision. Although freedom can provide children with opportunities to explore their environment, the limited involvement of parents may influence the development of children's ability to understand boundaries and responsibilities. Therefore, permissive parenting represents a pattern in which children's freedom is emphasized, while parental control and attention play a relatively limited role.

2.2. Level of Independence

Independence is an important characteristic of a healthy individual. It refers to the ability of an individual to think and act independently, make decisions, direct personal behavior, develop oneself, and adapt constructively to the norms prevailing in the surrounding environment. Susanto (2021) explains that independence is reflected in the ways individuals think and act, their ability to make decisions, their capacity to direct and develop themselves, and their ability to adapt constructively to the norms applicable in their environment. In children, independence can be observed through their everyday behavior. An independent child tends to demonstrate the ability to deal with problems rather than becoming excessively preoccupied with worry when facing difficulties. Independence is also reflected in children's willingness to take risks after considering the possible consequences of their actions. In addition, independent children tend to demonstrate confidence in their own abilities and have greater control over their lives (Susanto, 2021).

The development of independence is therefore not simply related to a child's ability to perform activities without assistance. It also involves the development of confidence, decision-making, problem-solving, and self-control. These abilities develop gradually as children gain experience in dealing with situations and are given opportunities to perform activities on their own. For preschool children, independence can be observed through their ability to manage aspects of their daily lives. The development of independence is particularly important because preschool children are beginning to experience increased opportunities to interact with their environment. At this stage, children gradually learn to take responsibility for their actions and develop greater confidence in performing activities. The family environment and

parenting practices are important contexts in which these abilities are developed. Parenting styles may therefore be relevant to children's development of independence. Parents who provide opportunities for children to express themselves and make choices may provide experiences through which children can practice independent behavior. Conversely, parenting characterized by strong control or very limited parental involvement may provide different experiences for children. Understanding these differences provides an important basis for examining the relationship between parenting styles and children's independence.

2.3. Preschool Children

Preschool children are generally children aged 3–6 years. This period represents an important stage of development in which physical development gradually slows while psychosocial and cognitive development continues to increase. During this period, children begin to demonstrate greater interest in their surroundings and develop improved communication abilities (Mansyur, 2019). These developmental changes enable children to interact more actively with other people and their environment. The preschool period is also characterized by children's increasing curiosity and desire to explore. Children begin to engage more actively with objects, people, and situations around them. Their learning occurs through exploration and direct interaction with their environment. As their communication abilities develop, children become increasingly capable of expressing their needs, thoughts, and feelings.

Between the ages of 3 and 5 years, children experience a remarkable developmental period characterized by strong interest in particular things and rapid changes in emotional expression. Their emotions may shift from excitement to whining and from tantrums to affection. These changes illustrate the dynamic nature of emotional development during the preschool years. At this stage, children are still learning to understand and manage their emotions while simultaneously developing their social and cognitive abilities (Mansyur, 2019). Preschool children may also be described as explorers, scientists, artists, and researchers because they demonstrate an active desire to discover and understand their surroundings. They enjoy learning and continually seek to understand how to make friends, interact with the world, and control their bodies, emotions, and thoughts (Mansyur, 2019). Their curiosity encourages them to explore new experiences, while their developing cognitive and social abilities enable them to gradually understand the consequences of their actions.

The characteristics of preschool children are closely related to the development of independence. As children become increasingly interested in their surroundings, they also require opportunities to perform activities and make simple choices. Their ability to control their bodies and emotions represents an important part of their development. At the same time, interaction with parents and the family environment provides children with experiences that can support or shape this process. Based on the literature discussed above, parenting style and children's independence are important aspects of preschool child development. Parenting style describes how parents care for, educate, guide, discipline, and interact with children, while independence refers to children's ability to think and act, make decisions, develop themselves, and manage aspects of their lives. Preschool children are at a developmental stage characterized by curiosity, exploration, increasing communication abilities, and rapidly developing emotional and cognitive capacities (Mansyur, 2019). Therefore, understanding parenting styles and the level of independence among preschool children provides an important theoretical basis for examining the relationship between the two variables.

III. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a correlational analytical design to examine the relationship between parenting styles and the level of physical independence among preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. A cross-sectional design was used, in which data on parenting styles and children's physical independence were collected at a single point in time. The study population consisted of parents of preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. The

sampling technique used was total sampling, meaning that all members of the identified population who met the study criteria were included as respondents. A total of 55 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected using questionnaires designed to obtain information regarding parenting styles and children's physical independence. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to determine the distribution of respondents and the characteristics of the variables under study. Univariate analysis was conducted to describe parenting styles and children's physical independence in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Bivariate analysis was subsequently performed to examine the relationship between parenting styles and physical independence. The Chi-square statistical test was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables, with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Results

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Parents' Age		
20–30 years	16	29.1
31–40 years	28	50.9
41–50 years	11	20.0
Educational Level		
Senior high school	4	7.3
Diploma/Bachelor's degree	51	92.7
Occupation		
Private-sector employee	25	45.5
Trader	10	18.2
Homemaker	20	36.4
Child's Age		
3 years	11	20.0
4 years	19	34.5
5 years	25	45.5
Total	55	100.0

Table 1. shows the demographic characteristics of the 55 respondents included in the study. More than half of the respondents were aged 31–40 years ($n = 28, 50.9\%$), followed by those aged 20–30 years ($n = 16, 29.1\%$) and 41–50 years ($n = 11, 20.0\%$). In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents had completed a diploma or bachelor's degree ($n = 51, 92.7\%$), while only four respondents (7.3%) had completed senior high school. Regarding occupational characteristics, the largest proportion of respondents were private-sector employees ($n = 25, 45.5\%$), followed by homemakers ($n = 20, 36.4\%$) and traders ($n = 10, 18.2\%$). In terms of children's age, most respondents had children aged 5 years ($n = 25, 45.5\%$), followed by children aged 4 years ($n = 19, 34.5\%$) and 3 years ($n = 11, 20.0\%$).

Table 2. Univariate Distribution of Parenting Styles

Parenting Style	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Less favorable	26	47.3	1.53	0.504
Favorable	29	52.7		
Total	55	100.0		

Table 2. indicates that 29 respondents (52.7%) demonstrated favorable parenting styles, while 26 respondents (47.3%) demonstrated less favorable parenting styles. The mean score was 1.53, with a standard deviation of 0.504. These findings indicate that, overall, the parents included in this study tended to apply favorable parenting styles.

Table 3. Univariate Distribution of Physical Independence

Physical Independence	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Less independent	23	41.8	1.58	0.498
Independent	32	58.2		
Total	55	100.0		

Table 3. shows that 32 children (58.2%) were classified as physically independent, while 23 children (41.8%) were classified as less independent. The mean score for physical independence was 1.58, with a standard deviation of 0.498. These results indicate that the children included in this study generally demonstrated a tendency toward physical independence.

Table 4. Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Physical Independence among Children Aged 3–5 Years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta

Parenting Style	Less Independent n (%)	Independent n (%)	Total n (%)	p-value	OR
Favorable	3 (10.3)	26 (89.7)	29 (100.0)	0.000	28.889
Less favorable	20 (76.9)	6 (23.1)	26 (100.0)		
Total	23 (41.8)	32 (58.2)	55 (100.0)		

Table 4 demonstrates a relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. Among children whose parents demonstrated favorable parenting styles, 26 children (89.7%) were classified as physically independent, whereas only 3 children (10.3%) were classified as less independent. In contrast, among children whose parents demonstrated less favorable parenting styles, 20 children (76.9%) were classified as less independent and only 6 children (23.1%) were classified as independent. The results of the Chi-square test showed a p -value of 0.000, which was lower than $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. This finding indicates a statistically significant relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta.

4.2. Discussion

a. Univariate Analysis

1) Parenting Styles

The findings showed that, among the 55 parents of children at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta, 29 respondents (52.7%) demonstrated favorable parenting styles, whereas 26 respondents (47.3%) demonstrated less favorable parenting styles. Based on these findings, more than half of the respondents tended to apply favorable parenting practices, which were predominantly characterized as democratic parenting. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Maulidiah (2018), entitled *“The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Independence among Preschool Children at Kindergartens in Karang Besuki Village, Sukun District, Malang City.”* The study reported a significant relationship between parenting styles and independence among preschool children, with a p -value of 0.000. This similarity suggests that parenting practices may be an important factor associated with the development of independence during the preschool period.

In the present study, 52.7% of the respondents demonstrated favorable or democratic parenting styles. According to Pratiwi (2019), democratic parenting involves guiding and educating children through discussion, explanation, and an understanding of the reasons underlying established rules. Parents who apply this approach provide explanations regarding the reasons for punishment or rewards rather than simply imposing them. When children demonstrate behavior that meets parental expectations, parents may provide praise as positive reinforcement. Thus, democratic parenting seeks to develop children's self-control while maintaining parental guidance and supervision. This approach is considered more favorable than an authoritarian parenting style because it provides children with opportunities to understand rules and participate in interactions with their parents.

The researchers argue that authoritarian parenting may contribute to lower levels of independence among children. Restrictive parental behavior, excessive fear of giving children freedom, harsh parental attitudes, and overprotective behavior may limit children's opportunities to explore and perform activities independently. Such conditions may contribute to children's dependence on parents, caregivers, or other individuals. Children may also become quieter and more anxious when they have limited opportunities to make choices or express themselves. Nevertheless, authoritarian parenting may also have a positive aspect, particularly in encouraging discipline and obedience to parental rules.

2) Level of Physical Independence

The findings regarding physical independence showed that 23 children (41.8%) were classified as less independent, whereas 32 children (58.2%) were classified as independent. These findings indicate that more than half of the preschool children included in this study had developed an adequate level of physical independence in performing activities related to their daily needs. The findings are consistent with the study conducted by Maulidyah (2018), which examined the relationship between parenting styles and independence among preschool children at kindergartens in Karang Besuki Village, Sukun District, Malang City. The study reported that most of the children were classified as independent, with 56 children (68%) falling into the independent category. The similarity between the two findings indicates that a considerable proportion of preschool children may demonstrate independent behavior during this developmental stage.

According to Pratiwi (2019), parental behavior can strongly influence psychological problems in children, including fear and lack of self-confidence, which may ultimately contribute to dependence. Several parental behaviors that may affect children's development include overprotection, insufficient control, indifference, excessive pampering, harsh treatment, insecurity, and favoritism. Parents who excessively indulge their children by fulfilling all their wishes may unintentionally limit opportunities for children to develop self-control and independence. The researchers therefore conclude that children's independence may be influenced by parental attitudes and behaviors. Excessive pampering may prevent children from developing the ability to perform activities independently, while neglect may deprive children of the guidance and support necessary for healthy development. These conditions may contribute to psychological difficulties, including low self-confidence, fear, anxiety, and excessive dependence on caregivers. Therefore, parents need to provide an appropriate balance between assistance, supervision, freedom, and opportunities for children to perform age-appropriate activities independently.

b. Bivariate Analysis

The results of the bivariate analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. As presented in Table 4, among children whose parents demonstrated less favorable parenting styles, 20 children (76.9%) were classified as less independent, while only 6 children (23.1%) were classified as independent. Conversely, among children whose parents demonstrated favorable parenting styles, 26 children (89.7%) were classified as physically independent, while only 3 children (10.3%) were classified as less independent. The Chi-square test produced a p -value of 0.000, which was lower than $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. This result demonstrates a statistically significant relationship between

parenting styles and physical independence among preschool children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta.

The odds ratio (OR) presented in Table 4. was 28.889. Based on the direction of the observed association, children whose parents demonstrated favorable parenting styles were substantially more likely to be classified as physically independent than children whose parents demonstrated less favorable parenting styles. The OR therefore provides additional evidence of the strength of the observed association between parenting style and children's physical independence. This finding is consistent with Maulidyah (2018), who reported a significant relationship between parenting styles and independence among preschool children at Karang Besuki Village Kindergarten, Sukun District, Malang City, with a p -value of 0.000 (<0.05). The consistency between the present findings and the previous study reinforces the importance of parenting practices in supporting children's independence during the preschool period.

According to Rezky (2023), parenting plays an important role in children's development. Parents need to provide appropriate education and guidance beginning within the family environment. Effective parenting includes the ability to care for, assist, educate, guide, and train children so that they can gradually develop into independent, creative, well-behaved, obedient, responsible, and confident individuals. The researchers argue that the manner in which parents raise and educate their children influences the development of children's independence. A secure and supportive family environment can provide children with the confidence necessary to explore their surroundings and perform activities independently. Parents who provide appropriate guidance while allowing children opportunities to act independently may support the development of physical independence. The findings further indicate that children raised under authoritarian and permissive parenting styles tended to have lower levels of physical independence, whereas children whose parents applied democratic parenting tended to demonstrate higher levels of physical independence. Democratic parenting may provide children with opportunities to make choices, express themselves, and gradually assume responsibility for age-appropriate activities while still receiving parental guidance. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that appropriate parenting practices, particularly democratic parenting, may play an important role in supporting the development of physical independence among preschool children.

V. Conclusion

This study was conducted to identify the relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta. More than half of the respondents (52.7%) had favorable or democratic parenting styles, with a mean of 1.53 and a standard deviation of 0.504, indicating that the parents in this study tended to apply favorable parenting styles. More than half of the children (58.2%) were classified as physically independent, with a mean of 1.58 and a standard deviation of 0.498, indicating that the children tended to be independent. There was a significant relationship between parenting styles and physical independence among children aged 3–5 years at Bukit Mulia School, North Jakarta, with $p = 0.000$.

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