

The Influence of Parenting and Peers on Early Childhood Character

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Abstract

Character is very important to build from an early age because it affects how individuals perceive themselves and their environment in everyday life. This study aims to explore the influence of parenting and peers on early childhood character. It is a quantitative correlational research employing a survey approach. The samples of this study were 169 early childhoods of Raudhatul Athfal Ambawara who had obtained permission from their parents. The data of parenting variables were collected by using questionnaires, while the data of peers and character variables were obtained through observation. The data analysis technique used was multiple regression analysis with the help of SPSS 20.0 software. The results show that there is an influence of parenting on early childhood character with a t value of 11,744 and a sig. value of 0.00. This study also found that peers have an influence on early childhood character with a t-value of 9,090 and a sig. value of 0.00. Implementing a proper parenting to early childhood and fostering social attitudes to interact with their peers are necessary to build their character.

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INTRODUCTION

The current curriculum of Early Childhood Education is focused on character building. Character is very important to build from an early age because it will affect how individuals perceive themselves and their environment in everyday life (Silahuddin, 2017). It is a set of values owned by humans and shaped from both heredity and the influence of the surrounding environment (Maskuri, 2018; Suarto, 2017).

Each individual has a different character from one another and it does not appear immediately when humans are born. The process of character building occurs through a long process (Alawiyah, 2012; Prasanti & Fitriani, 2018). Character building in children is focused on values, attitudes, and behaviors (Siswanta, 2017).

The character building of children begins from their family environment. The role of parental involvement is a very important factor in building children's character because parents are the first educators known by children (Budiman & Suva, 2018). Early childhoods have the nature of imitating what they see from the people around them in everyday life (Cahyaningrum, Sudaryanti, & Nurtanio, 2017). Therefore, parents need to apply appropriate parenting so that they can develop their children's character considering that it is one of the factors that can affect children's character (Ginanjar, 2017). Parenting is a process of interaction between parents and children to shape children's personalities from early age to adulthood (Anisah, 2011; Florencia, Dariyo, & Basaria, 2017). Parenting is also a determining factor that affects student learning achievement (Azizah, Wahyudin, & Suhandini, 2017).

Parenting has an important role in children's life especially in shaping their characters from an early age. A proper parenting can optimize their growth and development so that they can be the individuals that are strong and independent (Sari, Sri, & Anni, 2018). Unfortunately, parenting becomes a problem faced by parents at this time so that it is found

that early childhood behaviors tend to be negative because of the influence of the environment that does not support a good character development and children education from an early age.

Parents' behaviors will directly or indirectly be learned and imitated by their children. They are the closest environment that always surrounds them and at the same time become their figures and idols. When children see the good habits of their parents, they will quickly imitate them. Vice versa, if parents behave badly, their behaviors will also be imitated by their children. Children imitate how parents behave, speak words, express hopes, demands, and criticize each other, respond to and solve problems, and express feelings and emotions. A good behavior model will have a good impact on children's development, and vice versa.

Previous research conducted by Juhardin & Roslan (2017) emphasized the importance of implementing a proper parenting in developing positive behaviors in children. Inappropriate parenting practices such as limiting children's freedom and paying less attention and affection will have an impact on their attitudes, ways of thinking, feelings, and intelligence that will lead them into negative behaviors.

Besides being influenced by parenting, early childhood character is also influenced by peer factors. Children tend to break away from the dependence on their family so that they can start to enter the wider social environment of society. Children will choose an environment according to their interests. Then, they begin to form a group having the same member characteristics called peers (Utami, 2018). Peers are social groups consisting of individuals with almost similar social status, age and education (Blazevic, 2016). The existence of peers also has an important role in children's lives, especially in shaping their character. Previous research has shown that peers have an influence on character (Negara & Lyna, 2015). Children's social interactions with their peers usually occur in the school environment and in the environment around their house.

The socializing process of children with their social groups is an important process because it affects their skills and character (Rochaniningsih, 2014). The process of interaction between children and their peers takes role in character building; children who play with friends at the same age will affect their personality (Kurniawan & Sudrajat, 2018).

Based on the description of the importance of character building on children from an early age which can be influenced by parenting styles and peers above, this study aims to determine and analyze the influence of parenting and peers on character building of early childhood.

METHOD

This study is a quantitative correlational research employing a survey approach. The samples of this study were 169 children aged 5-6 years from 8 Raudhatul Athfal schools in Ambarawa who had received permission from their parents. Purposive sampling technique was chosen to determine the research sample.

The data collection used in this study was non-test technique namely questionnaire and observation. Observation sheets and questionnaires were made in a google form and were distributed through social media. Observation, assessment, and filling out instructions for parents are available on the first page of the google form. Parents are filling out the questionnaire, being observed, and assessed for further categorization and scoring.

The parenting scale was arranged based on 4 dimensions of parenting (Kamaliah, Melly, & Rusilanti, 2014) namely the dimensions of control, behavior, communication, and affection. While the peer scale was arranged based on 2 dimensions namely adjustment and acceptance as developed by (Utami, 2018). The character scale consists of 32 items referring to the character scale developed by the Directorate General of PAUDNI Ministry of Education and Culture. The scoring categorization for parenting ranges from 1-4 (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree). Meanwhile, the categorization

for character and peer scores ranges from 1-4 (Start Developing-Consistently Developing).

The data analysis used in this study was multiple regression analysis with the help of SPSS 20.0 software. The data analysis started with a prerequisite test including normality test, heteroscedasticity, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study consists of 2 independent variables namely parenting and peers, and 1 dependent variable namely early childhood character. The data description in this study is described in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Parenting	169	55.14	10.42
Peers	169	31.02	5.46
Character	169	93.05	14.44

Table 1 shows that the average value of parenting is 55.14 with a standard deviation by 10.42. The average peer value is 31.02 with a standard deviation by 5.46. Meanwhile, the average value of early childhood characters is 93.05 with a standard deviation by 14.44. The results of the descriptive analysis show that the mean value of each variable is greater than the standard deviation. It means that the representation of the data distribution for each variable is good.

The scores of the parenting questionnaire results are then categorized. The parenting score categorization is ranged 1-4 (strongly disagree-strongly agree). The categorization of parenting scores in this study is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Categorization of Parenting Variable

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	59	34.9
Agree	66	39.0
Disagree	43	25.4
Strongly Disagree	1	0.5

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the percentage of parenting in the strongly agree category is 34.9%, in the agree category is 39.0%, in the disagree category is 25.4%, and in the strongly disagree category is 0.5%. The average value of parenting in the agree category is 76.5%, which means that parents apply parenting by accepting their children's behaviors that are not in accordance with children's wishes (control), help them achieve independence and cultivate an attitude of responsibility in children (behavior), carry out two-way communication (communication), and provide warmth and love for their children so that they feel comfortable and safe when they are together with their parents (affection).

The peer categorization scores in this study are ranged from 1-4 (Start Developing-Consistently Developing). The categorization of the peer scores in this study is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Categorization of Peer Variable

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Consistently Developing	19	11.2
Developing as Expected	99	58.5
Start Developing	46	27.2
Undeveloped	5	2.9

Table 3 shows that the percentage of peers in the consistently developing category is 11.2%, in the developing category as expected is 58.5%, in the start developing category is 27.2%. Meanwhile, in the undeveloped category is 2.9%. The average value of children's interactions with peers is in the category of developing as expected is 70.5%. It means that early childhood in Raudhatul Athfal Ambarawa have the ability to accept the existence of peers and have the ability to interact with them.

The categorization of early childhood character scores in this study is ranged from 1-4 (Start Developing-Consistently Developing). It is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Categorization of Character Variable

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Consistently Developing	26	15.3
Developing as Expected	96	56.8
Start Developing	47	27.8
Undeveloped	0	0

Table 4 shows that the percentage of early childhood character in the consistently developing category is 15.3%, in the developing as expected category is 56.8%, in the start developing category is 27.8%. Meanwhile, the percentage of characters in the undeveloped category is 0%. The average value of early childhood character in this study is in the category of developing as expected by 72.6%. It means that early childhood in Raudhatul Athfal Ambarawa possess the characters of responsibility, honesty, discipline, love and affection, caring, courage, independence, hard work, mutual cooperation, courtesy, justice, and self-control.

After that, the research hypothesis was tested. It was done by using multiple regression with the help of SPSS 20.0 software to prove the influence of parenting and peers on early childhood character. Before testing the hypothesis, a prerequisite test was carried out including normality, heteroscedasticity, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity. The results of the multiple regression test are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Hypothesis Test

Variable	t	Sig.
Parenting	11.744	.000
Peer	9.090	.000

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that parenting has an effect on early childhood character. This is evidenced by the value of $t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$ ($11,744 > 1,960$) and the value of $\text{Sig.} < 0.05$. The results of the analysis also indicate that peers have an effect on early

childhood character as evidenced by the value of $t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$ ($9,090 > 1,960$) and the value of Sig. < 0.05 . It means that the hypothesis in this study is accepted which is there is an influence of parenting and peers on the early childhood character.

The results of this study show that parenting and peers have an influence on early childhood character. Previous research has discussed the correlation between parenting and character and the correlation between peers and characters, this study explores the correlation between parenting and peers on character at the same time. Previous studies were conducted on Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School students. Meanwhile, in this study, it was carried out in early childhood.

The results in this study are relevant to the research conducted by Riati (2016) stating that there is an effect of parenting on the children's character of class B. In addition, this study proves the findings of Firmansyah's (2019) stating that parenting has a significant effect on character building for children to be good or bad. Parenting has an important role in building children's character. Other research conducted by Alfiani, Erlinda, & Hambali (2017) also found that parenting has an effect on children's character. This study is relevant to the statement of Afrilyanti, Herlina, & Rahmalia (2015) that parenting affects the character building of children.

This study also proves the previous research conducted by Kurniawan & Sudrajat (2018) that peers have an effect on early childhood character. A research conducted by Hanifa & Muslikah (2019) is also proven in this study that peer conformity has an influence on children's compliance. The higher the peer conformity, the higher the child's obedience to discipline will be. Compliance is one of the attributes of character education. In addition, the research conducted by Negara & Lyna (2015) is also proven that peer interaction has an influence on children's character. However, the study also examined other variables such as family roles and teacher competence.

Research conducted by Susanto & Aman (2016) is proven in this study that parenting and peers affect children's character. However, the study also examined other variables namely television media as an independent variable. Between the three independent variables, socializing with peers is the biggest influence on children's character.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that the influence of parenting and peers on early childhood character is found in this study. The better the parenting and interaction of children with their peers, the better the early childhood character will be. Therefore, parents can apply parenting with the attitude of accepting children's behaviors that are not in accordance with children's wishes (control), help children achieve independence and cultivate responsibility in children (behavior), conducting two-way communication (communication), and provide warmth and love for children so that they feel comfortable and safe when they are with their parents (affection). In addition, teachers and parents need to foster children's social attitudes to interact with their peers considering that peers have an effect on early childhood character.

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