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Parental Role: Internalization of the Development of Independent, Disciplined, and Responsible Character Values for Children Aged 5-6 Years

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ABSTRACT: Parents play a crucial role in shaping the character of their children, and the character of children is closely tied to the involvement of both parents. This study aims to examine how parents function as educators, motivators, role models, controllers, and providers (facilitators) in cultivating character values, discipline, and responsibility in children. The research was conducted using qualitative methods with a sequential and phenomenological approach. Photo voice, combined with thematic analysis, served as the type and source of data. Data collection involved interviews and observations, with six pairs of parents with 5-6-year-old children participating in the study. The analysis revealed that parents, through their various roles, internalize the development of independent, disciplined, and responsible character values in their children. The study concludes that children aged 5-6 exhibit character values learned through a process of observation and imitation. Future research is encouraged to utilize these findings as a reference for instilling character values in children.

Keywords: character value, early childhood, parental role

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1 INTRODUCTION

The early years, often considered the golden age of child development, mark a period of rapid brain development. At birth, children possess billions of brain cells that are not yet fully connected. It is crucial for parents and educators not to overlook this opportunity to optimize the development of children's brain cells. According to Sjamsir et al., (2019), the foundation for developing individuals with character lies in providing a character-rich environment during their growth (Masruroh, 2020). The family, serving as the primary environment for a child's growth, plays a pivotal role in character formation through early education. Ibn Qayyim Al Jauziyyah, in the book Tuh-fatul Maudud, underscores the significant impact of education in shaping a child's character (Ramadhini, 2022). In other words, it is highly recommended that the issue of character development for preschool-aged children be explored, especially in the context of the family environment.

Character development from an early age is also considered an effort to preserve the values of a country's civilization (Munthe & Westergård, 2023; Russell et al., 2023; Wei & Ni, 2023). Indonesia is known as a multicultural nation that has diversity in early childhood care. The phenomenon of character development implemented in the realm of early childhood education is considered an "essence material" for the development of quality human resources in the 21st century which refers to Broefenberner's theory about the environment in building quality education (Mujahidah, 2015). Parental involvement is considered urgent when children learn to know what responsibility is, how disciplinary values are applied and support the child's self-actualization as a complete person (Liana et al., 2018). Referring to Maslow's opinion in D'Souza and Gurin (2016) interactions that are built according to the level of developmental attainment will help fulfill children's needs from an early age.

Andhika's (2021) research findings presented findings from supportive research, indicating that family dynamics significantly influence a child's character education. A violence-free family environment emerges as a highly effective solution, fostering a sense of comfort and peace for the child at home, leading to emotional stability and the development of positive character traits. Parents play diverse roles in shaping a child's mindset and behavior. Engaging in character values during early childhood initiates an internalization process, defined as a conscious action taken through practice, devoid of coercion. This conscious internalization forms customs or habits in an individual (Mubarok, 2021). In the family context, the internalization of character values in children involves strategic planning, content embedding, organization encompassing time, facilities, and infrastructure, actualization through habituation, setting examples, fostering family culture, and exercising control. In a study of early childhood character internalization in a global context (Epstein, 2018; Eslava et al., 2016; Harris, 2021; Ihmeideh et al., 2020). It is known that proper habits can help children through developmental tasks through communication with parents and integrated psychological support, so that the actualization of the expected character can be realized according to parents' expectations.

Internalizing character values in early childhood leads to their actualization. This aligns with Effendi's findings (2020) emphasizing the role of parents as mentors guiding children's development without imposing personal will, aiming to support self-actualization. Children who achieve self-actualization are better equipped to fulfill developmental tasks, facilitated by a learnig process with social support from those closest to them. The character values of responsibility, independence and discipline can also be interpreted as a process of preparing children's school readiness for elementary school (Marliyanti et al., 2020). Another study explored parenting patterns in Indonesia (Adawiah et al., 2023; Fono et al., 2019; Gunawan et al., 2020) which is seen as a variable that greatly influences the character of preschool age children, especially discipline and responsibility, regardless of the parents' background as substitute parents or not, which is elaborated with a gender approach. In other words, it can be understood that the gap in several previous research was continued by us in an in-depth investigation of several families which consistently demonstrated the role of parents in internalizing the character of independence and responsibility as the identity of the Indonesian nation to prepare human resources for the golden generation in 2045. This idea is also supported by Fuadia (2020) that self-regulation in children is formed through parental care in the aspects of discipline, responsibility and mutual trust between parents and children in the home environment as the first environment in teaching unknown things.

Given the insights above, the researcher aims to conduct further investigation into the parental role in instilling independent character values, discipline, and responsibility, particularly in children aged 5-6. This study places a primary focus on the parents' role, aiming to explore how the instilled character values can be realized by early childhood within the home environment.

2 THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1 *The Role of Parents in Cultivating Characters Values in Children*

Informal education within the family plays a vital role in shaping an individual's character, given that the family serves as the primary environment for a child's growth from early age to adulthood, contributing significantly to character formation (Winship et al., 2021). As the initial and predominant environment for a child's interactions, parents inherently serve as educators. The family environment is deemed crucial, considering that most a child's life unfolds within the family, making family-based education paramount in character development (Russo et al, 2021).

According to BKKBN (National Population and Family Planning Agency), parents have various roles (Holiseh et al., 2023) serving as educators, instilling religious and moral values through activities like shared worship and polite communication. Acting as encouragers, providing motivation to foster courage, confidence, and diligence in facing life's challenges. Functioning as role models, offering positive examples to children. Taking on the role of supervisors, overseeing children's attitudes and behaviors to prevent straying from societal norms. Acting as facilitators (Anggraeni et al., 2021), providing

learning resources such as study spaces, stationery, and textbooks to support children's educational processes.

2.2 *Cultivation of Independent Character Values, Discipline and Responsibility in Early Childhood*

To initiate the development of children's discipline, parents can establish several guidelines, such as setting specific times for play, study, and rest. By fostering a habit of adhering to these time rules, children will cultivate a disciplined attitude that, in turn, promotes a sense of responsibility. Alongside instilling discipline, cultivating independence in children can be achieved through regular activities. Encouraging children to independently handle tasks like eating, drinking, and organizing their learning materials is one approach (Purnomo et al., 2024; Rajab & Wright, 2018).

3 METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach utilizing phenomenological methods. The data collection involves indirect observation techniques, semi-structured inter-views, and documentation through the photovoice method. Subsequently, the collected da-ta undergoes analysis using thematic content analysis. The process starts with transcribing the interview results, followed by the identification and categorization of themes based on the discussed topics (Ferdiansyah et al., 2020).

3.1 *Participants*

This research included six sets of parents (both fathers and mothers) with children aged 5-6 attending school. The selection of these participants was based on the willingness of parents whose children were enrolled selected using purposive sampling technique in ECE Cakrawala Kaki Langit, Samarinda. Detailed participant data is provided in the accompanying can be seen in the Table 1 for Mother’s data, Table 2 for Father’s data, and Table 3 for Participant Child’s data.

Table 1. Mother’s Data

Participant	*Age*	*Last Education*	*Occupation*
AM	33 years old	Associate’s degree	Trader
EN	32 years old	High School	Housewife
ID	34 years old	Vocational High School	Caregiver
SG	32 years old	Associate’s degree	Housewife
WW	38 years old	Junior High School	Housewife
TR	34 years old	High School	Private Employer

Table 2. Father’s Data

Participant	Age	Last Education	Occupation
MH	34 years old	High School	Trader
HS	36 years old	Bachelor	Employee
SY	42 years old	Senior High School	Construction-Worker
HN	36 years old	Bachelor	Employee
YY	41 years old	Elementary School	Driver
RF	34 years old	Senior High School	Private Employer

Table 3. Participant Child's Data

Participant	Age	To School
RS	6 tahun	Preschool
AB	6 tahun	Preschool
SK	6 tahun	Preschool
SN	5 tahun	Preschool
NR	5 tahun	Preschool
AW	6 tahun	Preschool

3.2 *Research Procedure*

Prior to commencing the study, participants were requested to express their willingness to take part by completing a Google Forms questionnaire. The researcher clarified the study's purpose and objectives, adhering to research code of ethics guidelines. To ensure participant confidentiality, the researcher refrained from disclosing full names. The data collection procedures involved semi-structured interviews, recorded with the participants' permission using a tape recorder. During the interviews, participants responded to various questions related to the research theme. Additionally, the photovoice data collection meth-od was integrated, wherein participants documented the character values instillation process through photos and videos throughout the discussions.

3.3 *Data Analysis*

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content. The thematic approach aims to identify issues and experiences based on predetermined themes. The analysis focused on repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to understand the meaning and reflective journals that the researcher had collected. This interview data analysis procedure adopts the method used by Ferdiansyah et. al (2020), which starts with transcribing the interview results with the following process includes willingness to be a research participant, determining an interview schedule and using topic-based thematic analysis of the parental role and what characteristics show suitability for the aims of the research conducted. Then, we make relevant conclusions and recommendations regarding character development considering the role of parents.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *Result*

All data collected will be coded and interpreted according to the themes in this study (see tables 4 and 5). The researcher interpreted the information through critical discourse analysis to find the relevant meaning of each word in the interview dialog with the participants. The results of qualitative data analysis in this study resulted in two themes of findings, the five roles of parents in instilling character values in children aged 5-6 years and the actualization of independent character values, discipline and responsibility in children aged 5-6 years, these themes will be explained (see Table 4, 5, 6, 7, dan 8). Actualization of Character Values in Children Aged 5-6 Years will be seen at Table 9, 10, and 11).

Table 4. The Role of Parents in Cultivating Character Values

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
EN#2	"...now AB if given understanding is willing to obey, not like before"	Mother educates children through advice (Internalization of discipline character)
WW#5	"...NR likes to ask questions. He once asked me about Heaven, Hell, Allah and even the Prophet's song, sometimes if I don't answer, NR can search for himself on YouTube"	Mother educates children with questions and answers (Internalization of independent character)

Figure 1. Photo Voice of Parents' Role as Educators

Table 5. The Role of Parents as Motivators

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
AM#1	"...RS learns to read 3 times a week with me. Because they are used to studying with me at home, sometimes the hospital asks me "Mom, haven't you studied yet?"	Mother encourages children to study hard (Internalization of disciplined character)
ID#3 dan SY#3	"...SK wanted to buy a toy, so his father and I said, "if SK wants to buy a toy, he has to save first so he can buy the toy that SK wants."	Mother and father encourage children to be active in saving (Internalization of disciplined character)

Table 6. The Role of Parents as Role Models

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
MH#1	"...I pray five times a day at the mosque, so RS often prays with me"	Father becomes a role model in carrying out worship (Internalization of character discipline)
SG#4	"...SN I have been used to it since I was little to put things back in their place, such as putting dirty dishes in their place after eating."	Mother becomes a role model in eating ethics (Internalization of responsible character)

Table 7. The Role of Parents as Supervisors

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
AM#1	"...we will go to Jakarta on October 15th; we will be there for about 4 days shopping for materials. "Even so, I still communicate with the hospital via video call to check on the condition AM"	Mother supervises child when out of town (Internalization of responsibility character)
ID#3	"...SK likes playing fishing in the ditch in front of the house. Because the ditch is large, so I'll keep an eye on it."	Mother supervises child when playing outside the house (Internalization of discipline

		character)

Table 8. The Role of Parents as Providers (Facilitators)

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
SY#3	"...SK likes animals and transportation, so when he's off work, I take SK to the fish tourist spot on Jalan Padat Karya, Bengkuring or to see the boats at Tepian Mahakam. At tourist attractions I usually tell SK to obey the rules there"	Father provides educational tours as a medium of entertainment and education for children (Internalization of disciplined character)
TR#6	"...when I watch TV, I only play children's films and when AW holds the cellphone, I only play the animated films Nussa and Rara and Riko"	Mother provides educational shows for children (Internalization of discipline character)

Table 9. Actualization of Independent Character Values

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
HS#2	"...AB can bathe himself and wear his own uniform"	Actualizing children's independence when wearing uniforms.
TR#6	"...AW took his school shoes from the shoe rack and then put them on himself."	Actualization of children's independence when wearing shoes

Researchers found 2 child participants who had a higher independent character, namely AB#1 and AW#6.

Table 10. Actualization of Discipline Character Values

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
MH#1	"...when the sound of reciting the Qur'an was heard in the mosque (not yet the call to prayer), RS immediately got ready to go to the mosque to pray with me"	Actualizing children's discipline during prayer time
ID#3	"...SK has a pet in the form of a rabbit. Everyday SK routinely feeds his pet rabbit"	Actualization of children's discipline in feeding pets

Researchers found 2 child participants who had higher discipline characteristics, namely RS#1 and SK#3. The selection of the two child participants was based on interviews with both people (father and mother) as well as observations that the researcher had made.

Table 11. Actualization of Responsible Character Values

Interview Data	Interview Result	Findings
SG#4	"...even though SN takes reading lessons at a tutoring center, when at home SN also studies with me again so he doesn't forget the letters. The study schedule is during the day before going to lessons and at night."	Actualization of the character of responsibility for the learning to read schedule with the mother at home
WW#5	"... NR plays more outside with his friends, cycling or playing with his younger friends. "Because his friend is still small, NR often looks after him."	Actualization of the character of responsibility towards playmates by looking after them

Figure 2. *Photo voice* Actualization of Responsible Character Values

The researcher identified two children demonstrating elevated levels of responsibility character, specifically SN#4 and NR#5. The choice of these two child participants was determined through interviews with both parents (both father and mother) and observations conducted by the researcher. These two participants showed that their responsible character was influenced by the presence of a mother as a parent who was caring, loving, and willing to give her time. Also, the availability of play facilities prepared by parents under direct supervision at home.

4.2 *Discussion*

In the cultivation of character values, parents assume various roles, including that of an educator, motivator, role model, supervisor, and provider (facilitator). This aligns with the findings which supports Sugiharti's perspective on the parental duties in character education. These duties encompass providing education tailored to children's interests and talents (educator role), offering opportunities for age-appropriate development and expression (motivator role), imparting religious education, and shielding children from external violence (role model), safeguarding, and promoting children's health (supervisor role), and supplying play tools, spaces, and opportunities (facilitator role). This perspective is consistent with Muhibbin Syah's theory (Marliyanti et al., 2020) emphasizing parents as the primary educators, motivators, role models, and facilitators, contributing to the preparation of children's futures. In addition to these roles, the supervisory role of parents is highlighted, echoing Russo argue (Russo et al., 2021) that parents serve as supervisors of family behavior, particularly overseeing their children's actions.

In the case of children aged 5-6, their observable manifestation of character values stems from the learning process wherein they emulate the values instilled and practiced by their parents. This resonates with Hart P perspective (Hart, 2022), notion that children predominantly mimic their parents' behavior; witnessing their parents consistently engage in positive actions leads children to follow suit. Children are predisposed to imitate their parents as daily interactions primarily revolve around pa-rental figures, shaping their behavior from waking up to bedtime. This aligns at Hidayat et al., (2022) view that children, through interactions, gain knowledge, including values, from the people around them, particularly their parents.

In other words, research from Suciati et al., (2023) describes the development of moral education related to the internalization of character which depends on the readiness of

parents as collaborators at home. This relationship suggests that the role of parents should be maximized in parenting programs in each ECE school unit. Then, forming attitudes can also influence the egocentric identity of children, especially preschool age (Choi et al., 2024). Therefore, children's actualization plays an important role for parents in care and nurturing in routine activities such as praying, helping with work at home, and playing with parents (Choi et al., 2020; Glatz et al., 2022).

The actualization of independent character values in children is evident when they display initiative in tasks and problem-solving without requiring prior instructions, showcasing autonomy and reduced dependence on parents. Issue perspective that a child's independence supports self-control, problem-solving, confidence, decision-making, interpersonal intelligence, and social skills (Russell et al., 2023). Furthermore, this manifestation corresponds with Fono et al., (2019) defining independence as the ability to make choices and embrace the accompanying consequences.

Researchers realize that several research results regarding the role of parents in character discipline and responsibility are still limited and need to be explored in depth from various other variables such as honesty, empathy, and mental resilience in the context of character development in Indonesia (Boiliu, 2023; Mayasari et al., 2022; Shodiq, 2021). Research on preschoolers today shows the importance of parents being wholly involved. Fiskerstrand (2022) emphasized that parental involvement can help the outcome in the form of realizing an attitude of love for mathematics subjects, although the gap between parents who are willing to involve themselves voluntarily and forcedly cannot be ignored by researchers.

Regarding the actualization of responsibility character values in children, it is apparent when children exhibit awareness of their obligations. This alignment is observed by Yulianti et al., (2022), indicating that children with positive self-concepts tend to display responsible attitudes toward their duties and obligations. The manifestation of independent, disciplined, and responsible character values is intricately linked to the preceding role of parents. Through their involvement, parents contribute to the formation of a learning process for the child, who subsequently emulates the character values instilled (Vessuri & Canino, 1996).

Thus, the integration of this research contribution is an empirical study of how parents play a sustainable role in the context of the character of responsibility, honesty and discipline at home which has an impact on self-actualization and self-regulation in carrying out self-socialization. As the results of research by Puspytasari (2022) report that parents need to set an example for children, provide opportunities to practice, give responsibility, supervise, and direct children to be selective in socializing so that they are not influenced by bad things outside the home environment.

5 CONCLUSION

The study's results support parents in their role of instilling character values in early childhood. Parents act as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators.

The research identifies three characters value actualizations in children aged 5-6: independence, discipline, and responsibility. Children demonstrate independence by being aware not to depend solely on parents, discipline through orderly behavior, and responsibility by fulfilling obligations. The actualization of these values is attributed to the crucial role of parents in forming a learning process, where children imitate the character values taught by their parents.

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