



## The Role of Parenting Styles and Peer Acceptance in Shaping Interpersonal Skills in Early Childhood: A Study in Pati Regency

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### ABSTRACT:

Parenting styles and peer acceptance significantly influence the development of interpersonal skills in young children. The support provided by both parents and peers plays a crucial role in helping children adapt and integrate into social environments during the preschool years. The aim of this study is to examine whether parental parenting styles and peer acceptance have an effect on the interpersonal skills of young children in Pati Regency. This research employs a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto design, specifically using a causal-comparative research model. The study's population includes children aged 4-6 years, their parents (either fathers or mothers), and teachers working at Raudlatul Athfal institutions in Pati Regency. The sample consists of 99 parents and 92 teachers, selected through cluster sampling. Data analysis was conducted using linear regression with SPSS for Windows. The findings indicate that both parental parenting styles and peer acceptance have a positive and significant impact on the interpersonal skills of young children in Pati Regency, with a coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 27%.

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### 1. Introduction

Interpersonal intelligence, as defined by Gardner in Afdhilla & Mahendra, (2020) and Utami et al., (2024) is one of the nine types of intelligence that should be developed in early childhood. This intelligence is related to an individual's ability to understand and respond to the emotions and needs of others, as well as to interact effectively in various social situations. According to Oviyanti, (2017) interpersonal intelligence involves the ability to recognise social cues, both verbal and nonverbal, and to adapt communication styles to different social contexts. Strong interpersonal skills play a crucial role in helping children adapt to their social environment, which, in turn, can support their emotional and academic development (Pratiwi et al., 2023; Robinson and Diamond in Pahrul, 2022)

Family environment and peer interactions are two significant external factors that strongly influence the development of interpersonal intelligence in young children. Fukkink et al., (2019) emphasise the importance of parenting styles in shaping children's social intelligence, as the family is the primary environment for teaching social behaviours. In this regard, attachment theory and social learning theory suggest that the parent-child relationship is a key avenue for children to learn appropriate social behaviours (Chang et al., 2018). On the other hand, peers also play a crucial role in children's social development. Santrock (2007), cited in Qoniatuzzahroh, (2018) states that peer interactions can significantly influence children's social development through reciprocal support, such as sharing, empathy, and cooperation.

This study aims to analyse how parenting styles and peer acceptance influence the interpersonal skills of young children in Pati Regency. Based on preliminary observations in several Raudlatul Athfal (RA) institutions in Pati, issues were identified regarding the development of children's interpersonal skills, such as a lack of social sensitivity and social communication. Some children still display negative behaviours, such as reluctance to share toys or food with peers, and a lack of habit in using polite words like "please," "sorry," and "thank you." One teacher also noted that some children tend to snatch toys from their peers, which they believe is influenced by parenting styles where children's demands are met without clear boundaries.

The existing research gap lies in the limited understanding of how both parenting styles and peer acceptance interact to affect the development of interpersonal skills in young children. This study addresses that gap by further exploring the relationship between parenting and social interactions in the development of children's interpersonal skills. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide clear recommendations for parents and teachers to foster the development of children's interpersonal skills and identify appropriate interventions to improve interpersonal skills in children who are lagging behind in Pati Regency.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Approach

This study employs a quantitative methodology using an ex-post facto design. The ex-post facto approach involves examining independent variables that have already occurred prior to the researcher determining the dependent variable (Ibrahim, 2018). The primary aim of this method is to uncover causal factors that contribute to behavioural changes, phenomena, or events that have taken place. This research adopts a causal-comparative framework, exploring how parenting styles and peer acceptance impact the development of interpersonal intelligence in young children.

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises children aged 4-6 years, their parents (either mothers or fathers), and teachers from Raudlatul Athfal institutions in Pati Regency. A cluster sampling technique was employed for data collection, where the population was divided into groups (clusters) based on location or institution within the region. From the 8 institutions authorised for research, samples were randomly selected from each cluster, resulting in a total of 99 parents and 92 teachers. This technique allowed for the selection of representative respondents from each institution without the need to access the entire population within each cluster. Data was gathered through questionnaires and Google Forms using a Likert scale to assess parental parenting styles, peer acceptance, and the interpersonal skills of young children.

### 2.3 Instrument

This study examines three variables, comprising independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include parenting styles and peer acceptance, while the dependent variable is the interpersonal skills of young children. The parenting styles variable was measured using the PSDQ-SF instrument, adapted for the Indonesian context by Rahmawati et al., (2022). Peer acceptance was assessed using a questionnaire developed by Ramadhani, (2020) and interpersonal skills were evaluated using a questionnaire created by Rahmawati, (2015). The research instruments are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Research Instruments**

Variable	Indicator	Item
Parenting Style*)	Authoritative	1, 6, 5, 10, 13, 17, 20, 22, 26, 28
	Authoritarian	2, 4, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 23, 27, 29
	Permissive	7, 14, 16, 19
Interpersonal Skills **)	Emotional sensitivity	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	Collaboration with others	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25
	Organising others	26, 27, 28, 29, 30
Peer Acceptance***)	Playing with peers	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9
	Interacting with peers	5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
	Collaborating with peers	15, 16, 17, 18
	Displaying behaviour disliked by peers	19, 24

**Sources** : \*) *Parenting Style*: Adapted from PSDQ-SF by Rahmawati et al., (2022) for use in Indonesia.  
 \*\*) *Interpersonal Skills*: Adapted from a questionnaire by Rahmawati, (2015)  
 \*\*\*) *Peer Acceptance*: Adapted from a questionnaire by Ramadhani, (2020).

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Data collection was conducted through surveys and Google Forms, which were used to evaluate parenting approaches, peer acceptance, and the interpersonal skills of early childhood children. Data analysis employed statistical methods using SPSS version 25 for Windows and Excel software. The collected data were analysed in three stages: (1) Descriptive Analysis, (2) Assumption Testing, and (3) Hypothesis Testing (including t-tests and F-tests).

### 3. Result

The initial descriptive data include demographic information from the study examining the impact of parenting styles and peer acceptance on the abilities of young children in Pati Regency. The study involved a total of 99 young children, with 99 respondents (both fathers and mothers) and 92 teachers participating. Among the 99 children assessed, their ages ranged from 4 to 6 years, with 9 children aged 4, 44 aged 5, and 46 aged 6.

#### Parenting Styles

Table 2 summarises the findings from the analysis of responses to closed-ended questions on parenting styles.

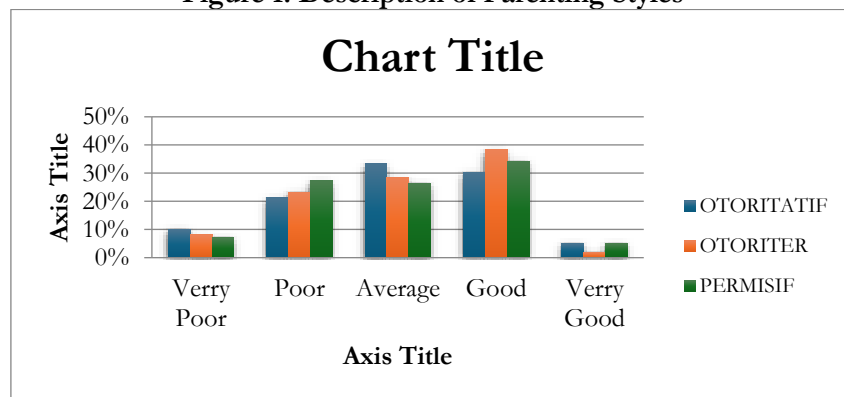
**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Parenting Styles**

Parenting Style	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authoritative	99	31	50	42,74	4,41
Authoritarian	99	23	46	36,92	5,65
Permissive	99	9	20	14,73	2,36
Valid N (listwise)	99				

**Source:** Processed research data, 2024

The descriptive statistical analysis in Table 2 indicates that the mean value is higher than the standard deviation. This suggests that the data is well-distributed. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the parenting styles variable can be found in Figure 1, classified into several categories.

**Figure 1. Description of Parenting Styles**



**Source:** Processed research data, 2024

Based on the data recapitulation, the predominant parenting style adopted by parents is the authoritative style. This is evident from the respondent distribution, with the majority falling into the "Good" category (30.3%) and the "Average" category (33.3%), collectively accounting for 63.6%. The authoritative parenting style is considered balanced as it combines warmth and affection with clear boundaries.

#### Peer Acceptance

Table 3 provides a summary of the analysis of responses related to peer acceptance.

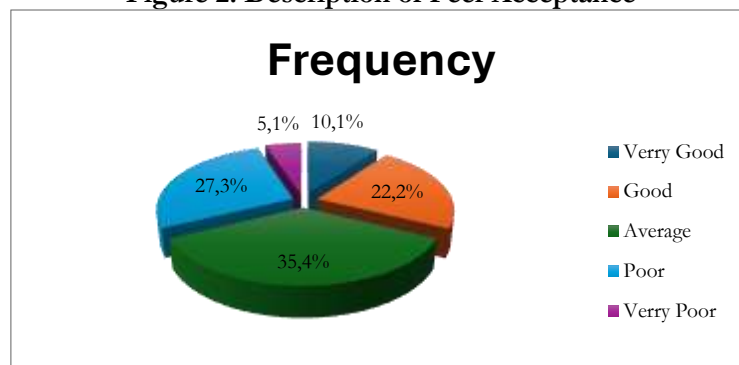
**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Peer Acceptance**

Aspect	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Play	99	13	29	21.88	3.39
Interaction	99	19	34	26.56	3.10
Cooperation	99	9	20	14.20	2.63
Misbehaviour	99	3	10	7.74	1.55
Valid N (listwise)	99				

**Source:** Processed research data, 2024

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis in Table 3 reveal that the mean value is higher than the standard deviation (Std. Deviation). This suggests that the mean is a good representation of the data, particularly in terms of its distribution. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the peer acceptance variable is illustrated in Figure 2, which categorises the data into several groups.

**Figure 2. Description of Peer Acceptance**



**Source:** Processed research data, 2024

Based on the frequency distribution and percentage of the peer acceptance variable, the results indicate that the largest proportion falls within the "adequate" category, which accounts for 35.4% (35 respondents) of the total sample. This finding suggests that, overall, the level of peer acceptance among children is average, with most children displaying a reasonably good level of acceptance, although there remains a group of respondents in the "poor" and "very poor" categories. This highlights the need for interventions to improve the quality of peer acceptance towards more positive outcomes.

### Interpersonal Skills

Table 4 summarises the results of an analysis of early childhood responses concerning interpersonal skills.

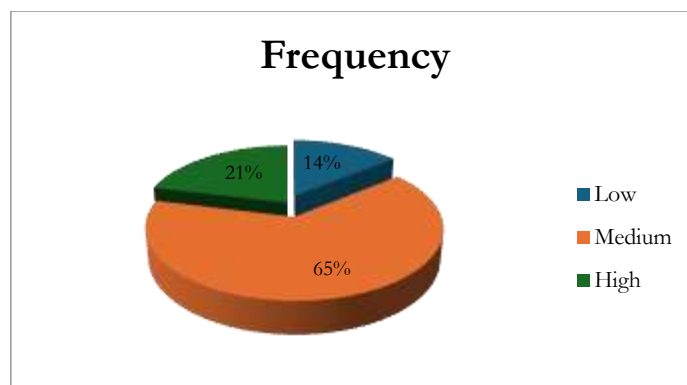
**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Interpersonal Skills**

Aspect	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sensitivity	99	14	25	20,33	1,84
Cooperation	99	56	74	64,71	4,02
Organisation	99	10	20	15,08	2,51
Valid N (listwise)	99				

**Source:** Processed research data, 2024

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical analysis, the interpersonal skills variable shows that the mean value is higher than the standard deviation. This suggests that the data distribution falls within a reasonably good range. Further information regarding the frequency distribution of the interpersonal skills variable can be found in Figure 3, which classifies the data into several categories, as shown in the following figure.

**Figure 3. Description of Interpersonal Skills**



Source: Processed research data, 2024

Based on the frequency distribution and percentage of the interpersonal skills variable, the majority of respondents (65%) fall into the moderate category, followed by 21% in the high category and 14% in the low category. These findings suggest that, overall, children's interpersonal skills are at a moderate level, indicating a sufficient capacity for social interaction, although there remains room for further development towards a more optimal category.

### Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (t-Test and F-Test)

The research hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression analysis, with the statistical findings presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	F	t	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
1 (Constant)	71,111	4,977			14,288	,000		
Parenting (X1)	,179	,044	,352		4,035	,000		
Peer Acceptance (X2)	,172	,041	,364	17,798	4,168	,000	,520	,270

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Skills (Y)

Source: Processed research data, 2024

Based on Table 8, the F-test results reveal that the independent variables jointly have an impact on the dependent variable. The obtained F-value of 17.798 surpasses the F-critical value of 3.091, with a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This finding indicates that parenting styles and peer acceptance, when analysed collectively, have a significant effect on the interpersonal skills of young children in early childhood.

The t-value for the parenting variable (X1) is 4.035, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.984, while the t-value for the peer acceptance variable (X2) is 4.168, also surpassing the critical value of 1.984. With a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , this indicates that both parenting (X1) and peer acceptance (X2) have a significant effect on early childhood interpersonal skills. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.520, with a coefficient of determination (R Square) of 27%.

## 4. Discussion

### Parenting Styles and Their Impact on Early Childhood Interpersonal Skills

Findings from the conclusive descriptive analysis indicate that 43% of parents typically adopt an authoritarian parenting style, 36% employ an authoritative approach, and 15% use a permissive style. Among the 99 participants (either mothers or fathers), nearly half were identified as practising an authoritarian style of parenting.

Results from the direct linear regression analysis reveal that parenting styles contribute 14% (R Square = 0.139) to the development of interpersonal skills in early childhood, with the remaining influence attributed to other

variables not explored in this study, as detailed in Table . This underscores that parenting approaches significantly affect the interpersonal skills of young children.

**Table 6. Simple Linear Regression Test**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	F	T	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
	1 (Constant)	82,259	4,537					
Parenting (X1)	,189	,048	,372	15,597	3,949	,000	,372	,139

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Skills (Y)

Source: Processed research data, 2024

This study reveals that the majority of parents in Pati Regency tend to adopt an authoritative parenting style, which is associated with positive outcomes for early childhood development. These findings align with the research by Putri, (2016) and Rahimah & Muzdhalifah, (2019) which suggest that the authoritative parenting style significantly contributes to children's interpersonal skills. This approach encourages children to form healthy relationships with their social environment, including peers, through a democratic method that enables the development of communication, empathy, and cooperation skills.

In the context of the Attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby and adapted by Khaeruddin & Ridfah, (2020) a harmonious relationship between parents and children fosters a sense of security and self-confidence, which ultimately facilitates better social interactions. This view is supported by the research of Mumtaz et al., (2024) which highlights that parental responsiveness, warmth, and emotional presence are crucial foundations for building a child's sense of security. Conversely, a lack of security resulting from disharmonious relationships can lead to increased anxiety and hinder the child's social competence. Therefore, positive parenting plays a pivotal role in supporting the development of interpersonal skills in young children.

Although the findings of this study have relevant implications, there are several limitations that must be considered. Firstly, the sample size used is relatively small, consisting of 99 respondents, meaning that the generalisation of these findings should be done cautiously. Secondly, the cultural context of Pati Regency, which has specific norms and values regarding parenting styles, could influence these results. Therefore, applying the findings to populations with different cultural backgrounds requires further investigation to ensure the external validity of these results.

Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight the strategic role of parents in supporting the development of children's interpersonal intelligence. As emphasised by Ki Hajar Dewantara in Amaliyah, (2021) the family is the primary and most significant educational centre, profoundly influencing the development of a child's character, morals, and mindset. This argument is supported by the research of September et al., (2016) which demonstrates that positive parenting creates high-quality social learning experiences, enabling children to develop trust in their social environment. Additionally, the study by Kilonzo, (2017) underscores that the quality of the parent-child relationship is a key factor in supporting a child's ability to interact socially and adapt.

### Peer Acceptance of Interpersonal Skills in Early Childhood

Results from a simple linear regression analysis indicate that the peer acceptance variable accounts for 15% (R Square = 0.147) of the variation in interpersonal skills among young children, with the remaining influence attributed to other variables not measured in this study.

**Table 7. Simple Linear Regression Test**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	F	t	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta					

1	(Constant)	87,377	3,140		27,824	,000		
	Peer Acceptance (X2)	,181	,044	,383	16,685	4,085	,000	,383 ,147

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Skills (Y)

Source: Processed research data, 2024

Ahmad (2009: 44), as cited by Utami, (2018), states that peers represent a social environment that significantly influences a child's development. Through peer involvement, a social process occurs where individuals mutually influence one another. As a result, peer relationships become highly important, serving as a foundation for acquiring basic adaptive skills within a social context while also helping children develop and sustain positive connections with their peers.

This perspective aligns with Harry Stack Sullivan's theory of interpersonal communication, as noted by Kaune et al., (2023). Sullivan's theory provides valuable insights into the significance of peer approval, especially during childhood. He emphasised that childhood relationships are critical for emotional and social growth, highlighting that interactions with peers are essential for identity development, social skills, and fostering empathy. Positive experiences within a social environment and the acceptance children receive from various social activities form a crucial foundation for their future success and happiness (Utami, 2018).

Studies by Mardiyani & Widyasari (2023), Khoirunnisa et al. (2023), Idham et al., (2023) reveal a clear connection between peer acceptance and interpersonal skills in early childhood. Peers play a vital role in nurturing social skills such as communication, cooperation, empathy, and conflict management. A supportive social environment, particularly one that includes peers, aids children in developing interpersonal intelligence, encompassing the ability to understand others' feelings, build positive relationships, and solve problems collaboratively. Children with strong interpersonal skills are often more readily accepted by their peers. Traits like empathy, clear communication, and social awareness are key indicators of a child's ability to interact successfully in social situations.

### The Influence of Parenting Styles and Peer Acceptance on Interpersonal Skills

The combination of parenting styles and peer acceptance has a significant impact on the development of interpersonal skills in early childhood. The family environment serves as a key factor in supporting children's educational success (Kartika et al., 2021). Parents play a crucial role in helping children develop their abilities, including interpersonal skills. Children who regularly engage in communication with their parents within the family setting tend to be more adept at interacting with others (Sari et al., 2021). Additionally, peers make a substantial contribution to children's interpersonal development. As highlighted by Cowie & Dawn (2009), Wilt et al. (2018), and Pahigiannis & Glos (2018), cited by Purnama et al., (2021), peers play an essential role in fostering children's social growth. Interaction with peers enables children to learn adaptation, communication, and socialisation skills, which in turn enhances their social and emotional competencies.

Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory highlights the crucial role of social interactions in children's learning and growth. He introduced the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which defines the difference between what a child can accomplish on their own and what they can achieve with support from more experienced individuals, such as parents, educators, or peers (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018).

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis in this study indicate that parenting styles (X1) and peer acceptance (X2) have an influence on interpersonal skills (Y). This is demonstrated by an F-value of 17.798, which exceeds the F-table value of 3.091, and a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. These findings suggest that parenting styles (X1) and peer acceptance (X2) significantly contribute to the interpersonal skills (Y) of early childhood children. Support from parents and peers is essential in helping children acquire the social skills necessary for adapting to and being accepted in their preschool environment. Denham et al. (2012), as cited by Ramadhani, (2020), highlighted that relationships between children and their parents and peers foster positive and productive interactions with others, ultimately aiding in the development of long-term beneficial relationships. Furthermore, Ramadhani, (2020) research emphasised that a combination of nurturing parenting techniques and peer acceptance plays a crucial role in the social development of early childhood children in Gugus I, Wates Subdistrict.

## 5. Conclusion

Parenting styles and peer acceptance have a significant impact on the interpersonal skills of young children in Pati Regency. The majority of parents adopt an authoritative parenting style, which positively influences the children's social skills. This underscores the importance of collaboration between parents and educators to create an environment that fosters the development of children's interpersonal abilities. To enhance these skills, parents can encourage open communication and support group activities, while teachers can employ social interaction-based teaching methods and provide guidance to children who require special assistance. Future research could explore school and family-based interventions aimed at optimising the development of children's interpersonal skills.

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