

The Character of Adolescents In The North Aceh Coastal Area: An Impact of Authoritarian Parenting Style

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Abstract

Parenting style is an activity of guiding, educating, and raising children. There are three types of parenting styles, i.e., authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. This study investigates the effects of authoritarian parenting on adolescents' character in the coastal community at North Aceh. It is a qualitative study in which the participants were fifteen fishermen who have adolescent children between 12-18 years old. The data were obtained through interviews and observations, which were subsequently analyzed qualitatively. The results showed three negative effects of authoritarian parenting on adolescents' character, i.e., disobedience, impudence, indiscipline, and irresponsibility. Negligence of these adverse effects may lead to criminal acts in adolescents and affect their future mental development.

Keywords: Parenting style, Authoritarian, Adolescent character, Coastal community

Introduction

Family is an initial vehicle that plays a role in developing a child's character. Islam considers education in a family, where parents act as caregivers, mentors, nurturers, and educators for their children, as essential. As Allah SWT has said in Surah at-Tahrim verse 6 as follows:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded” (QS: At-Tahrim:6) (Kementrian Agama RI, 2016).

The verse stated that parents are obliged to take care of their children by educating, guiding, and nurturing them according to Islamic values; thus, developing adolescents with a good character in their relationships with God, fellow humans, and the environment. Furthermore, Abdullah Nasih Ulwan stated that there are guidances for educating children in Islamic teachings. The teachings

also explained that parents are responsible for educating children regarding faith, morals, physical, logic (aqal), psychological, and social characters ('Ulwan, 2012).

The importance of education in a family is also mentioned in the Prophet's hadith as follows:

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet PBUH said, "No child is born but that he is upon natural instinct. His parents make him a Jew, or a Christian, or Magian. As an animal delivers a child with limbs intact, do you detect any flaw?" (Narrated by Bukhari).

The hadith explained that every child is born in a state of fitra (innate nature), meaning in a state of faith and Islam. Parents have the central and initial role in nurturing, guiding, and directing the continuity of the child's fitra development to grow and develop in the child's self. The development of human fitra in the family is an initial synergistic forum for children to acquire knowledge, skills, interests, as well as emotional values and attitudes before entering the school and community environment, which are continuations of family education.

Children's character development begins through parenting because the knowledge provided by parents, i.e., aqidah (creed), sharia (Islamic law), and akhlak (character) education, is the primary and initial education for children (al-baitu madrasatul la). School education (formal) and education in the community will follow afterwards. Character education aims to encourage the development of perfect children. Children with good characters will have the capacity and commitment to do good deeds, do everything correctly, and have positive life goals.

Gunawan stated that a character refers to a series of attitudes, behaviours, motivations, and skills (Gunawan, 2012). A character has a role in controlling one's thoughts and behaviour, determining one's success, lifestyle, accomplishments, and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, character education in the family has a critical role. Character education is not only related to conscience, but it also instils habits, i.e., set examples manifested in concrete actions through good behaviour, such as honesty, politeness, responsibility, discipline, and empathy (Mulyasa, 2011).

Experts have suggested various methods of character education in children. Abdurrahman An-Nahlawi suggested several approaches that can be applied to adolescents, i.e., dialogue (hiwār), qishah or story, amtsal or parable, uswatun hasana (model of excellent conduct), habituation, ibrah mau'izah (Targhib), and Tarhib (promises and threats) (An-Nahlawi, 1995). In addition, Thomas Lickona stated that character education could be developed through stages of knowing, acting, and habituation. Character education is not limited to knowledge alone because there is no guarantee to apply the knowledge properly if not trained (become a habit) to do good deeds. Character education also includes emotions and self habits. Thus, a good character requires three elements, i.e., moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 2012). Parents must guide the development of the elements so that children can understand, feel, appreciate, and practice good character values.

In Islamic teaching, the Prophet SAW ordered his people to have a great character and be good role models. The Prophet SAW himself is a role model (*uswatun hasana*) who gives examples in practising the contents of the Quran in daily life. In Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21, Allah said the following:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example¹ for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often”. (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21) (Kementrian Agama RI, 2016).

The verse above shows that Islam has determined the characters of every faithful human being. However, a good parenting style is required to instil the values into the child's soul.

Character education is a manifestation of a human's basic concept as *fitra*. Every child is born according to their *fitra*, i.e., intelligence, physical body, heart, and soul. Currently, this concept is being developed into the concept of multiple intelligence. The government has prepared a character education guideline based on the national education goals, i.e., the Guideline for Implementing Character Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The guideline explained that character education aims to build a solid and competitive nation with a noble character, morality, tolerance, cooperation, patriotic, dynamic, oriented towards science and technology, and based on the faith in God Almighty and Pancasila. Character education functions to (1) develop basic potentials to be kind-hearted, good-minded, and well-behaved; (2) strengthen and build a behaviour of a multicultural nation; (3) improve the nation's civilization to be globally competitive (Kemdikbud, 2011).

It is empirically proven that many adolescents are involved in drug abuse, sexual harassment, fights, promiscuity, murder, and other crimes that may affect their character development. The responsibility to nurture adolescents can only be realized through a correct educational path, i.e., parents must carry out their duties and obligations as educators in the family. However, parents who do not have adequate knowledge to educate children's character still exists. Some parents still carry out the parenting style that their parents previously applied, or they would carry out the dominant parenting style applied by their community, particularly in coastal communities (Fitriani, 2019). The cultural and economic characteristics of the coastal communities in Indonesia differs from those of agricultural societies. The fishermen's high-risk work, including seasonal harvesting, leads to the coastal communities' firm, harsh, and temperamental character (Masri, 2017). This condition sometimes affects the parenting style applied to the children. The coastal communities in Aceh firmly hold Islamic culture and values, which, if combined with the local culture, results in a unique custom in educating children. This situation agrees with Hossain, who stated that the Muslim community believes that every aspect of their life, including children education, must follow the rules set out in Islam (Hossain, 2013).

Many empirical studies on authoritarian parenting and its impact on children have been conducted. Previous studies show that authoritarian parenting has negative impacts on children. Authoritarian parenting also has positive impacts, but the negative impacts are undeniably more significant. A study by Huang et al. (2017) in Taiwan demonstrated that authoritarian parenting, as opposed to democratic parenting, has negative impacts on children's psychology.

Authoritarian parenting can also cause anxiety disorders in adolescents, particularly in a social context (Timpano et al., 2015). This parenting style can also decrease academic achievements and negatively affects self-adjustment to the school environment (Kenney et.al. 2015). Authoritarian parenting may affect the adolescent's relationships with their peers (Becht et.al. 2017). An opposite result was obtained in a study by Perwiranegara (2020), who concluded that adolescents from authoritarian families tend to have a disciplined learning attitude and do not have much opportunity to engage in deviant activities. However, they still develop issues, i.e., self-confidence and perceptions of their social and academic abilities.

Fitriani (2019) showed several factors that influence parenting styles, namely education, socio-economic status, culture, and parenting style applied by previous generations. The study concluded that the parents' education level affects the awareness and concern in educating children. It was also found that parents in coastal areas ask their children to help with their work from an early age, as early as five years old. Coastal parents also tend to follow parenting styles that are passed down from generation to generation. In addition, it was also found that the Malay community prioritizes religious education and tends to ignore other formal educations.

Based on the observations in several coastal areas in Aceh, authoritarian parenting applied by fishermen is relatively dominant, especially among those with low education. Thereby, this study focused on the effect of authoritarian parenting on adolescents' character in the coastal area of North Aceh. Specifically, the research question is "How does authoritarian parenting impact the development of adolescent's character in coastal communities at the North Aceh Regency?"

Method

This study used a qualitative approach. The participants consisted of fifteen fishers from the coast of North Aceh Regency who have adolescent children. The adolescents involved in this study include early and young adolescents, i.e., between 12 to 18 years old (Mappiare, 1982). Due to the vast geographical condition of the research location, five subjects were selected from each of the three regions, namely the eastern, central, and western regions.

The primary data in this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with the subjects. Prepared instruments guided interviews to maximize the extracted information according to the research objectives and ensure those interviews took place effectively and objectively. Each interview

session was recorded and then transcribed to facilitate data analysis. In addition, observations and documentation were conducted at the research location to support the data.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts, observations, and documentation were analyzed qualitatively through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2017). During the data reduction stage, the author read fifteen interview transcripts repeatedly to find several keywords that could provide answers to the research on the impact of authoritarian parenting on the development of adolescent characters. The keywords were then grouped based on their characteristic similarities, and each group was named based on a representing character. For example, the keywords "yelling," "cursing," "berating" were grouped as "impolite language". As part of the validation process, a colleague was invited to discuss the keyword grouping. The output was presented as study results and concluded. Several related studies were also used as references in concluding the results. Other facts discovered at the research site but outside of the research question were kept as additional notes. Later, they were assessed for their significance and linked to the discussion of the results.

Theoretical Review

Parenting is everything that parents do to shape the behaviour of their children, including rules and warnings, teachings and plannings, examples and affection, as well as praise and punishments (Kenney et al., 2015). Thus, parenting can also be interpreted as activities to educate, guide, nurture, and direct children to carry out everything that has been ordered. Parents have a significant responsibility in raising their children. Also, parents must provide Islamic teachings to their children based on the values in the Quran and Hadith. Thus, various forms of educational activities carried out by parents for their children are religious responsibilities as a mandate imposed on them that must be accountable to Allah SWT.

Some experts classify parenting styles into authoritarian, permissive, and democratic (Rakhmawati, 2015). In authoritarian parenting, the parents have more control and do not allow children to express their opinions. They may also give physical punishments. In contrast, permissive parents tend to neglect, pay less attention, have less control, and succumb to the child. In democratic parenting, the parents accept, are cooperative, embrace openness, and teach children to develop self-discipline, honesty, and sincerity in dealing with problems. They also give children sincere and positive rewards, teaching them to develop responsibility for their behavior and actions, friendly and fair, not quick to blame, and warm and loving to their children.

Each parenting style will result in children with specific characteristics. According to Hurlock, authoritarian and permissive parenting generates children with a negative character, while democratic parenting generates children with positive characters. Authoritarian parenting creates timid, quiet, and introverted children, who do not take the initiative, are rebellious, norm-violating, have weak personalities, anxious, and withdrawn. Permissive parenting creates impulsive, aggressive, disobedient, spoiled, dependent, selfish, insecure, and socially immature children. Meanwhile, children educated with democratic parenting are independent, have self-control, have good relationships with friends, handle stress well, have interests in new things, and are cooperative (Hurlock, 1993).

Results and Discussions

This section describes the results of interviews and observations at the research location. In line with observations before the study, the parenting style applied by the subjects was dominated by the authoritarian style. The communication between parents and their adolescent children was terrible because they dominated and decided all family policies and regulations. The parents tend to yell and scold using harsh words when educating their teenagers. They admit it as a parenting style that the coastal communities have applied for generations. The impact of authoritarian parenting on the adolescent's character felt by the subjects can be categorized into four types, i.e., rebellious, impolite, indisciplined, and irresponsible. The three characters are described below.

Rebellious Act

Several parents stated that they usually ask their children to do something by yelling or scolding, which are characteristics of authoritarian parenting. The children's reaction was rebellious, e.g., not obeying at all or carrying out their parents' orders half-heartedly. The situation is demonstrated from the excerpt of an interview with Mr. AZ as follows:

When I educate my child with violence, scold or yell to ask them to perform the five daily prayers, go to school, and learn to recite the Quran, my child does not take the order seriously, either it is praying, going to school, or learning to recite the Quran....

Similarly, Mr. AS mentioned the following:

I am used to yell and scold my children so they will perform worships, such as praying, fasting, learning to recite the Quran, go to school, or help their parents. However, my children often do not do what I tell them to do [...] they often disobey me, while I am their parent ...

Similar stories were heard from several other parents, i.e., their adolescent children seemed to not care about their parents' words. The children will eventually do it when it is repeated and affirmed, sometimes in a louder voice.

Impoliteness

The authoritarian parenting applied by the subjects also tends to talk to children using harsh words and loud voices by scolding, yelling, or berating. Children often imitate this attitude because parents are their role models. Some parents admit that they often yell and use harsh words when talking to their children due to their uncontrollable emotional state. Often, the parents' physical exhaustion when they return home after sailing can trigger their rude attitude when talking to their children. As a result, the children tend to imitate and use harsh words when interacting with others, including their siblings, friends, and parents. Furthermore, they similarly talk to their siblings as their parents did. This condition is revealed in the following interview excerpt.

I realized that I have been raising my children without setting a good example, either in performing the daily prayers or in other things. If they do not do what I ask them to do, then I use violence and control, like scolding, yelling, and berating so they obey [...], but my child often yells back and use harsh words, so eventually we fight and argue with harsh words to each other ... (Mr. HD)

In the interview excerpt above, Mr. HD admitted that his violent approach to educating children is terrible. In another interview, he admitted that fatigue or family economic problems often trigger his uncontrollable emotions when facing his disobedient children. Similarly, Mr. AZ and Mr. AS also spoke about their children's attitude, who in turn also yells and scolds others, including their siblings and even their parents.

...my child often yells and scold his siblings as I did to him, even though sometimes his siblings are innocent. (Mr. AZ)

...In fact, my son also scolded his brother whose problem was not clear... (Mr. AS)

This rude attitude creates an uncomfortable atmosphere in the family. Quarrels and arguments occur almost every day, either between siblings or between children and parents.

Indiscipline and Irresponsible Attitudes

Authoritarian parenting also leads to a lack of discipline and responsibility in adolescents when carrying out tasks assigned to them. They tend to neglect their duties, play around, and carry out their parents' orders half-heartedly, e.g., when the parents ask them to perform the five daily prayers, study, or do homework. They usually do not carry out the routine tasks if not reminded.

... there is no discipline in my children, and there is no sincerity when they carry out their duties. If not reminded, my child does not pray, does not study on time, neglects his tasks, and does not feel any responsibility when the task is not completed yet ... (Mr. IS)

Several subjects admitted that the adolescent's negligent and indisciplined attitudes often trigger parents' emotional outbursts. As a result, the parents often apply physical punishments, such as tweaking and hitting their children.

... sometimes I get upset and hit my children when I see them playing and not reciting the Quran or perform prayers, even though their mother and I have reminded them every day." (Mr. HD)

Several parents admitted that adolescents often act negligently; they play or watch TV when they should be doing tasks, such as helping parents in the kitchen, studying, and doing homework from school or the Quran recitation course. They do not carry out their tasks if not reminded.

Discussions

Three effects of authoritarian parenting style to the adolescents' characters

The parenting style implemented by parents has implications on the children's characters formation, including their physical and psychological development (Riati, 2016; Simanjuntak, 2017). The research finding indicates three significant effects of authoritarian parenting style on adolescents' characters of the coastal community in North Aceh, i.e., disobedience, impudence, indiscipline, and irresponsibility. The disobedience character has been proposed by Hurlock (1993) as one of the characters formed in children who receive an authoritarian parenting style. Impudence character might be the result of breaking the norms. The indiscipline and irresponsibility characters are related to having no initiative to do tasks. Disobedience to parents will impact hostility within the family and with others. Several studies indicated that children become aggressive due to their parents' treatment and behavior (Munawir, 2016; Novitasari et al., 2017). This finding was different from Perwiranegara's (2020); he claimed that adolescents from authoritarian families tend to be discipline in learning. The cultural difference can be the reason for the contrast findings from the studies. Besides, authoritarian parenting style can be interpreted differently between eastern societies such as China and those in the West, including America and Europe (G. H. Huang & Gove, 2015), even in the Asia societies (Hirani, 2017).

The adolescents' impudence character imitated from their parents' impacts on their behavior to their siblings, friends, and others in their environment. The behaviors can be in the form of hurting others verbally using harsh words and insults, and other non-verbal actions, such as being rude.

The quality of relationship with parents can influence the adolescents' self-concept that finally affect their social relationship with their peers (Sari, 2020). The further effect of this behavior is bullying, it has been investigated as one of the effects of authoritarian parenting style (Irmayanti, 2016; Ningrum & Soeharto, 2016).

On the other hand, the indiscipline and irresponsibility to the duties affect the adolescents' behaviors at school and community. It will impact their learning process and academic achievement both at school and *pengajian* (Islamic studies group). It is in line with some studies about the negative effects of authoritarian parenting on adolescents' academic achievement (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Kenney et al., 2015).

Parenting culture of coastal community in North Aceh

One of the findings in this research indicates that the authoritarian parenting style has been very dominant and has become a hereditary tradition among parents in a coastal community in North Aceh when educating their children. Examples of this style are scolding or snapping the children in order to do their tasks. The community parenting style, specifically the coastal community, is distinctive and influenced by the local culture. The style was from their previous parents.

Besides, as a Muslim community that adheres to Islamic traditions, parents living on the coast in North Aceh concern with religious education for their adolescents. A similar phenomenon was investigated by Fitriani (2019) in the coastal community of Melayu ethnicity: Parents assumed that religious education is the main priority in educating children; however, general education was ignored. Only those with better educational background do not have the perception. In contrast, the result of interviews with fishermen on the coast in North Aceh in this study indicates that their perception of the priority of religious and general education is equal. The compulsory duties of their adolescents are praying five times a day, reciting the holy Quran, fasting, learning at school, and helping their parents.

The strength of culture and Islamic values among coastal communities in North Aceh can be a solution in developing a better parenting style to shape the adolescents' character. Islam has guidance in educating children. Parents living on the coast in North Aceh should be aware of the importance of learning the parenting style taught in Islam (Baihaqi, 2001; Djamarah, 2004; Syafri, 2012). As an example, in terms of communications between parents and kids or among their family members, Islam recommends using kind and true words, polite and nice utterances, as well as understandable words (Djamarah, 2004). In addition, Djamarah (2004) asserted that the parents' habits create the kids' habit known as behavior. Thus, parents implementing the Islamic ways of

communication in their family are expected to form polite behavior as the character of their adolescents.

Conclusion

The research found three effects of authoritarian parenting on adolescents' characters in North Aceh's coastal community, i.e., disobedience, impudence, indiscipline, and irresponsibility. The interview with research subjects indicates that parents on the coast have limited knowledge in educating their children. It is concluded from their ineffective communication between parents and their children. They tend to use harsh words and snap instead of using nice words. This type of communication increases adolescents' negative characters, such as being impudent and neglectful. Furthermore, it will cause an attitude of disrespect in the family, including fighting with their siblings, indiscipline in doing worship and learning both at school and *pengajian* (Islamic studies group), irresponsibility to the task given by their teachers and impoliteness when talking to their parents and siblings.

Based on the findings of this study, coastal parents' awareness and knowledge in raising adolescents should be improved. Adolescents are very vulnerable to negative behavior because of the influence of their family and environment. Suppose the negative characters of the fallacious parenting style are neglected. In that case, it will lead to criminality at their school (Irmayanti, 2016), affecting their mental development in the future (C.-Y. Huang et al., 2017; Timpano et al., 2015).

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