

PARENTING PATTERNS AND PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR IN YOUNG CHILDREN IN PATI

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Sep 4, 2025

Revised Oct 29, 2025

Accepted Nov 01, 2025

Keywords:

Parenting Styles

Early Childhood

Discrimination

Family Education

Child Character

ABSTRACT

Childhood is a fundamental stage in the formation of individual character and social behavior, particularly regarding acceptance or rejection of diversity. Children aged 4–6 years are in a highly sensitive developmental phase where parenting styles play a central role in shaping how they perceive differences. This study aims to analyze the influence of parenting styles on the tendency toward discriminatory behavior in early childhood in Kertomulyo Village, Pati Regency. Using a qualitative approach and case study method involving four families, data were collected through online interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that modern parenting styles such as positive parenting, mindful parenting, and gentle parenting when applied consistently, can foster empathy, tolerance, and acceptance of differences. Conversely, inconsistent parenting, authoritarian styles, excessive protectiveness, or lack of supervision over digital media consumption can contribute to the development of discriminatory attitudes in children. These findings underscore the crucial role of parents in instilling inclusive values and shaping children's character from an early age, as well as the need for collaboration among families, educational institutions, and communities in creating environments that support the growth of a tolerant and just generation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a crucial phase in an individual's development, during which children absorb information and experiences from their environment. It is important for them to receive optimal stimulation and learning opportunities in order to reach their full potential (Alia & Irwansyah, 2018). This phase also forms the basis for the development of children's social, emotional, and character behaviors. The saying "knowledge gained in childhood is like carving on stone" illustrates that the

knowledge and skills acquired at an early age will leave a strong impression and become a solid foundation for further development. (Z et al., 2020).

This research is unique in that it focuses on the special conditions of discrimination that occur in Pati Regency, especially in Kertomulyo Village. In this region, socio-cultural dynamics and family parenting patterns play a major role in shaping discriminatory behavior in early childhood (4-6 years). Even though there are strong collectivist values in Indonesian culture, sometimes this gives rise to a tendency towards exclusivity which can strengthen discrimination if there is no intervention from families, educational institutions and society (Bestha Inatsan Ashila, Arianda Lastiur Paulina, Aisyah Assyifa, 2024).

The early childhood period is a crucial phase in a child's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Children aged 4-6 years are in a very sensitive stage of growth and development, where they begin to form an understanding of the world around them and develop social attitudes. Early childhood education must pay attention to the potential for discriminatory behavior towards ethnic, cultural, religious, and other groups to ensure that their development is not disrupted (Harini et al., 2025).

According to John Locke, babies are considered "blank slate" that are easily shaped by the environment in which they grow up (Hafiz & Suparto, 2024). Therefore, the parenting style applied by parents is a major factor in shaping a child's character (Triandini & Kuswanto, 2020). Discriminatory behavior that emerges at an early age can have a long lasting impact on a child's social and emotional life in the future. Therefore, it is important to understand how parenting styles influence discriminatory behavior tendencies in early childhood. Experience and living environment play a crucial role in shaping a child's character and thinking (Triandini & Kuswanto, 2020). The first six years of their lives are a critical period for physical, cognitive, and social emotional growth. This period is considered a vital foundation for the child's future, so parents are advised to provide optimal educational stimulation so that children can reach their full potential (Hasbullah & Nurhasanah, 2024).

The family is the first environment for children to get to know their closest relatives, such as their father, mother, and sibling. Children model the behavior of their parents and other family members in their daily interactions (Dwistia et al., 2025). Good parenting is very important in shaping a child's emotional intelligence as an adult (Muali & Fatmawati, 2022). Therefore, proper parenting is key to

shaping a child's character (Ahmad, 2020).

Discriminatory behavior in early childhood can be characterized by several indicators. First, children show social exclusion such as refusing to participate in group activities or deliberately avoiding interactions with different friends. Second, children tend to form closed groups and reject other children who are considered different in terms of ethnicity, religion, skin color or social background. Third, expressions of prejudice arise through demeaning or ridiculing peers because of differences, which can lead to exclusion or unfair treatment. Fourth, children can imitate discriminatory attitudes from the environment such as parents, friends, or media consumed without supervision. Fifth, discriminatory physical behavior, such as violence or refusal to play with different friends, is also an important indicator to observe (Aulia, 2024).

These indicators need to be paid attention to because discriminatory behavior that appears in children can have a serious impact on their social and emotional development until adulthood. Discriminatory behavior in children can have a serious impact on their social and emotional development (Salsanabilainun, 2024). Therefore, understanding and handling this indicator is very important in education and parenting to foster attitudes of empathy, tolerance and respect for diversity (Aulia, 2024).

Research shows that family parenting styles influence the level of discriminatory behavior in children. Research by Killen and Rutland shows the importance of understanding how families influence children's behavior, including discriminatory actions (Aini, 2024). In addition, a meta analysis by Aboud and Levy shows that interventions to reduce prejudice in children successfully change their behavior. Proper parenting can support healthy physical growth and psychological development in children (Fatmawati, 2020), while improve parenting can have fatal consequences for their personality development (Saffan, 2019).

Albert Bandura's theory emphasize that children imitate adult behavior, including discriminatory actions, so it is important for parents to create a positive environment to prevent the formation of discriminatory behavior in children aged 4-6 years (Dian Pertiwi et al., 2021).

Research (Green et al., 2024) reinforces that positive parenting practices, characterized by responsiveness, open communication, and positive reinforcement, can improve children's prosocial behavior and reduce prejudice. Children who

receive stimulation of equality values from an early age are better able to reject negative stereotypes. Additionally, (Duncan et al., 2009) asserts that mindful parenting, which is parent's full awareness in their interactions with children, can foster empathy and reduce discriminatory tendencies. (Lansford n.d.2019) also emphasize that warm parenting needs to be complemented with explicit social value to shape non discriminatory behavior. Meanwhile, authoritarian parenting, overprotective parenting (helicopter parenting), and minimal supervision of digital media consumption can encourage children to absorb negative stereotypes from their surroundings (Saffan 2019; Rideout, V. 2021).

In addition to families, early childhood education institutions and communities also play an important role in strengthening the values of tolerance and social justice, although their implementation still faces challenges in the field (Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, and Indonesia 2018; Nugraheni, P. 2021; UNICEF Indonesia 2020).

The condition of discrimination in Kertomulyo Village was recorded as low based on the results of observations and informant interviews, which showed that significant cases of discrimination among young children were not found in the village (Aulia, 2024). This data is strengthened by the majority of respondents actively encouraging inclusive attitudes and respecting differences in the family and social environment (Bestha Inatsan Ashila, Arianda Lastiur Paulina, Aisyah Assyifa, 2024). However, the biggest challenge is the potential influence of negative stereotypes that can arise from authoritarian parenting, lack of openness, or lack of supervision of digital media consumption, which can be a source of indirect discrimination (Shofuroh & Wulandari, 2024).

Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the influence of parenting styles on the formation of discriminatory behavior in early childhood is very important, not only for families but also for educational institutions and wider society (Aulia, 2024). Collaboration between families, schools and communities is needed to create a safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment, so that children can grow into individuals who respect differences and can make positive contributions to a diverse society (Satyaninrum & Habibah, 2021).

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research location is in Kertomulyo Village, Trangkil District, Pati Regency. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that Kertomulyo Village is a

representative environment with a diversity of economic, educational and social backgrounds that are relevant for understanding the influence of parental parenting on discriminatory behavior in early childhood. In addition, limited access and readiness of participants in this village supports the effective implementation of online interviews. The purpose of this study is to gain an in depth understanding of the influence of parenting styles on the emergency of discriminatory behavior in children aged 4-6 years. The subjects in this study are four different families, each with children aged 4-6 years. Each family consisted of parents (father and mother) and children who were the focus of observation. Thus, the total number of informant in this study was eight parents from four families. The selection of informants was done purposively with the criteria of residing in Kertomulyo village, having children aged 4-6 years, being willing and cooperative in the online interview process, and representing different backgrounds, economies, and education to enrich the perspective. The four families were selected to provide a variety of perspectives on parenting patterns and children's responses to their social environment. This research uses data collection techniques in the form of online interviews. Online interviews make it easier to access participants who are in different locations without having to travel, so that time and cost efficiency can be maintained (Susanti et al., 2020). In addition, online interviews provide a more comfortable atmosphere for respondents to share opinions openly, so that the data obtained tends to be more authentic and rich in information (Girsang et al., 2022).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that parenting styles play a significant role in shaping the social behavior of children aged 4-6 years, including their tendency to be discriminatory. Four families in Kertomulyo Village showed variations in parenting styles that directly influenced the inclusive or exclusive attitudes of their children.

Strengthening the Concept of Parenting Styles and Early Childhood Social Development

Parents in Pati strengthen the concept of parenting by providing consistent emotional stimulation, such as giving praise when children show independence and teaching children to share and care about the social environment. For example, they actively invite children to interact with peers from different backgrounds to train empathy and social adaptation. This positive parenting style helps children regulate

their emotions and empathize with others. Research by (Haryono et al., 2018) confirms that parental parenting styles greatly determine the independence and emotional regulation abilities of young children. Positive parenting styles help children grow into healthy and independent individuals, while inappropriate parenting styles can hinder children's social development. This is in line with the findings of (Khairunisa et al., 2024), which show that democratic parenting has a positive and significant influence on the social behavior of young children raised in a democratic environment tend to be more adaptable, cooperative, and have high empathy towards their social environment.

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Social Emotional Development

Parents play an active role in guiding children to manage their emotions, for example by calming them down when they are angry and teaching them the right words to express their feelings. They also regularly discuss with their children the importance of knowing themselves and respecting others so that their children's self-concept and emotional control develop well. (Studi et al., 2022) research found a significant relationship between the role of parents in parenting and the social emotional development of early childhood. The more active the role of parents in parenting, the better the social emotional development of children, especially in terms of self concept and emotional control.

The Complexity of Child Developmental Psychology

Parents in Pati provide a warm and loving environment that stimulates children's physical, cognitive, social and moral development, such as by inviting children to play while learning to identify feelings and social values such as honesty and cooperation. According to (Nasution et al., 2024), the psychology of early childhood development involves physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, moral, and religious aspects. The process of child development is not only influenced by internal factors but is also greatly influenced by the family environment, particularly the parenting style provided by parents.

Character Building and Discrimination Prevention

Parents avoid authoritarian parenting by providing responsible freedom and teaching children to respect differences through examples of inclusive attitudes in the family and social environment. For example, they guide children to resolve conflicts peacefully and appreciate the uniqueness of their friends. Research shows that authoritarian parenting can trigger exclusive and discriminatory traits in children. Research (Elan & Handayani, 2023) highlights that authoritarian parenting can influence character formation in early childhood, including a tendency to be exclusive and discriminatory. Therefore, warm and responsive parenting is essential for building an inclusive character in children.

The Influence of Parenting Styles on Discriminatory Behavior

Parents instill the values of tolerance and justice by providing examples in everyday life, such as inviting children to take part in mutual cooperation activities in diverse cultural environments, so that children get used to interacting without prejudice. A study by (Crone et al., 2024) confirms that families play a central role in influencing children's discriminatory behavior. Family based interventions that emphasize values of tolerance have been proven effective in reducing prejudice and discriminatory behavior from an early age.

The Importance of Social Values Education in Parenting

Parents actively provide education on social values, such as respecting cultural and religious differences, by reading children stories that contain messages of diversity and holding simple discussions about social values in the family. (Lansford n.d.2019) emphasize that warm parenting needs to be complimented with explicit social values to shape non discriminatory behavior. Gentle parenting that only emphasize emotional closeness whitout active social values education can make children more susceptible to absorbing stereotypes from the external environment.

The Role of Educational Institutions and Communities

Parents in Pati support their children in participating in PAUD programs that prioritize the value of tolerance, as well as participating in community activities that prioritize inclusivity, for example celebrating holidays with people from various backgrounds. In addition to families, early childhood education institutions and communities also play an important role in strengthening the values of tolerance and social justice. However, implementation in the field still faces various challenges, especially in building a truly inclusive environment (Mcnamara, 2015).

Cultural Factors and Social Context

Parents are aware of the influence of collectivist culture in Pati and try to form a parenting style that not only prioritizes group harmony, but also teaches children to respect individual diversity, such as encouraging children to play with friends from various ethnicities and religions. Indonesia's collectivist culture can be a strength in building solidarity, but it can also be a source of exclusivity if harmony is only focused on group similarities. The values that prevail in society also shape families' views on diversity and can increase discriminatory tendencies if there is no intervention from families or schools (Apologia et al., 2023).

Parenting Style and the Formation of Discriminatory Behavior in Early Childhood

Parenting patterns are the main foundation in shaping children's character and social behavior, especially in early childhood (4-6 years), which is very sensitive to environmental influences (Alia & Irwansyah, 2018). At this stage, children do not yet have mature social filters, so whatever is modeled and taught by parents will be easily internalized as personal values and norms (Triandini & Kuswanto, 2020). Pati's parents apply positive parenting and mindful parenting with open communication and strengthening positive behavior, as well as actively discussing social and cultural differences so that children can internalize inclusive attitudes. For example, parents invite children to dialogue about the importance of respecting different friends and monitoring the media content consumed by children to avoid negative influences. John Locke's blank slate theory asserts that children are born without innate knowledge, so the family environment becomes a dominant factor in shaping attitudes and behaviors, including discriminatory tendencies (Hasbullah & Nurhasanah, 2024).

Positive parenting, which emphasizes open communications, respect for differences, and reinforcement of prosocial behavior, has been proven effective in fostering empathy and tolerance. Children raised with this parenting style tend to be more accepting of diversity and less likely to exclude friends from different backgrounds (Green et al. 2024; Green et al. 2024). Conversely, inconsistent authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, as well as overprotective parenting (helicopter parenting), can encourage children to adopt negative prejudices and stereotypes from their environment (Saffan, 2019). Children who grow up in families with these parenting styles are more likely to exhibit discriminatory behavior toward peers who are different physically, culturally, or economically (Fatmawati, 2020). Children who grow up in mindful families tend to be more empathetic and have lower levels of prejudice toward other groups.

However, gentle parenting that only emphasizes emotional closeness without explicitly teaching social values can make children more susceptible to absorbing stereotypes from the outside environment (Lansford n.d.2019). Therefore, an effective parenting style in preventing discriminatory behavior is one that is not only warm and responsive but also actively instills values of diversity and anti-discrimination (Triandini & Kuswanto, 2020).

This research explains that there are four parenting patterns found in research subjects consisting of four families. Each family applies a different parenting style, providing variations in the way children are cared for and character shaped :

1) **Positive Parenting : Developing Empathy and Tolerance**

Parents in Pati who implement positive parenting patterns consistently implement open communication and provide positive reinforcement for their children's good behavior. They give children the opportunity to express their feelings and opinions, so that children feel valued and trusted. For example, in situations of playing with friends from different backgrounds, parents encourage children to share toys and greet friends in a friendly manner, teaching inclusive values and respect for diversity (Green et al., 2024). This is in line with Bandura's social learning theory, which states that children learn by imitating the behavior of the adults around them (Patton, 2021). When parents model inclusive attitudes, children will internalize these values in their social interactions. The study (Triandini & Kuswanto, 2020) emphasize that children are like a "blank slate" and are easily shaped by their early environment, so responsive and open parenting is very important for instilling values of tolerance from an early age.

In addition, (Ahmad, 2020) adds that empathy based parenting and appreciation for diversity are the main foundations in building children's inclusive characters that are open to differences.

2) **Mindful Parenting : Parental Emotional Awareness in Parenting Discrimination**

In mindful parenting, parents are conscious and attentive in every interaction with their children. They not only let children make friends with anyone, but also actively dialogue with children about diversity and the importance of respecting differences (Duncan et al., 2009). In families in Pati who implement this parenting style, activities such as discussing cultural differences in the surrounding environment and teaching children to manage their emotions so that they are not quick to judge or judge differences are found. Children who grow up in mindful families tend to be more empathetic, better able to manage their emotions, and have lower levels of prejudice toward other groups. (Duncan et al., 2009) also highlights that mindful parenting helps parents manage impulsive reactions, enabling them to provide wiser and more empathetic guidance to their children. As a result, children learn not to immediately judge or reject differences, but rather to strive to understand and accept diversity as part of social life.

3) **Gentle Parenting : Warm Emotional Relationships**

In families that practice gentle parenting, warm emotional bonds do shape

children to be friendly and sociable. However, if not accompanied by active and consistent social values education, children remain susceptible to absorbing stereotypes from the external environment (Fatmawati, 2020). In this research, it was found that families in Pati with a gentle parenting style were parents who prioritized warmth in interactions, such as giving hugs and words of affection, and listening attentively to the child's feelings. However, parents are less active in discussing or explicitly teaching the value of diversity to their children. As a result, children lack a strong understanding of the importance of respecting social and cultural differences.

This study found that gentle parenting that is not balanced with active discussions about diversity can make children vulnerable to negative environmental influences, such as prejudice and stereotypes that develop in society.

4) Helicopter Parenting and Digital Parenting : Sources of Discrimination Risk

Helicopter parenting, which is an overly protective parenting style that tends to control every aspect of a child's life, can encourage children to choose friends based on the social labels given by their parents (Saffan, 2019). This attitude reinforces exclusivity in children's social relationship, which can lead to discriminatory behavior towards peers who are different socially, economically, or culturally.

Additionally, digital parenting without supervision is also a risk factor for the emergency of discriminatory behavior. Young children exposed to digital content without parental guidance tend to internalize the prejudices and negative stereotypes they encounter on social media or other digital platforms (Rideout, V. (2021). Therefore, the role of parents in co viewing and open discussion about media content is crucial in helping children discern good values and develop an inclusive attitude.

Cultural Factors and Social Context

Indonesia's collectivist culture strongly emphasizes the importance of harmony, togetherness, and obedience within the family (Juli et al., 2025). These values can be a strength in building solidarity, but they can also be a source of exclusivity if harmony is focused only on group similarities. In collectivist societies, differences are often seen as a threat to harmony, so children tend to learn to avoid or even reject different groups (Lansford n.d.2019).

The social context in villages, such as in Kertomulyo, reinforces homogeneous interaction patterns and can increase discriminatory tendencies if there is no intervention from family or school values (Imaduddin et al., 2020). The social

norms that apply in society also shape families' views on diversity. If society tends to tolerate discrimination, then families will find it more difficult to instill inclusive values in their children (Nugraheni, P. (2021).

However, cross cultural research shows that parental warmth and responsiveness remain universal keys to reducing discriminatory tendencies in children, regardless of the family's culture or social background (Lansford n.d.2019). Therefore, it is important for families in Indonesia to consciously teach the values of tolerance and respect for differences as part of the nation's diverse identity.

The Role of Fathers in Childcare

This study reveals that role of fathers in early childhood care in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, is still suboptimal. Fathers are often positioned as the main breadwinners, while the responsibility of parenting is mostly borne by mothers (Cabrera et al., 2018). In fact, the involvement of fathers in parenting has been proven to improve children's social emotional development, including building empathy and tolerance towards differences (Puglisi et al., 2024)

Fathers who are actively involved can serve as role models in treating others fairly and respecting differences. Children who see their fathers being inclusive and open to diversity will imitate this behavior in their social interactions (Patton, 2021). Conversely, the absence of a father's role can leave a void in values that is then filled by negative stereotypes from the outside environment (Fatmawati, 2020).

Enhancing the role of fathers in parenting is not only important for child development but also for strengthening family resilience in facing social challenges, including preventing discriminatory behavior in children (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Social Media as an External Factor

In the digital age, social media and digital content have become an integral part of children's lives, even from an early age. Exposure to uncontrolled media content can reinforce negative prejudices and stereotypes, especially if children do not receive guidance from their parents (Rideout, V. (2021). Children's video content, games, and social media often portray certain groups in a biased or even discriminatory manner.

Young children who are exposed to biased content without guidance tend to internalize these prejudices as truth. Therefore, the role of parents in co-viewing (watching together) and open discussion about media content is very important to help children sort out good values and build inclusive attitudes (Green et al., 2024).

Additionally, monitoring digital media consumption must be balanced with providing digital literacy to children, so they can recognize and reject content containing discrimination or negative stereotypes (Rideout, V. (2021).

The Role of Formal Education and the Community

Apart from the family, early childhood education institutions (PAUD) have a strategic role in shaping inclusive attitudes and preventing discriminatory behavior in children. Permendikbud No. 137 Tahun 2014 emphasizes the importance of developing moral and social values in early childhood, but its implementation in the field still faces various challenges (Pendidikan et al., 2018). Early childhood teachers and educators need to be given special training in managing diversity in the classroom and identifying signs of discrimination early on (Nugraheni, P. (2021). The early childhood curriculum should explicitly teach anti-discrimination values, tolerance, and respect for differences. Communities also play an important role in strengthening children's character education. Community-based parenting programs, such as those promoted by UNICEF Indonesia, have proven effective in reducing social prejudice in children through joint activities that involve diversity. Collaboration between families, schools, and communities is key to creating an inclusive, safe, and prejudice-free environment (UNICEF Indonesia. (2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that parenting patterns play a key role in shaping the social behavior of early childhood, particularly in preventing discriminatory behavior. Children aged 4-6 years are very sensitive to environmental influences, so the family is the main foundation for instilling values of empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity. Warm, open, and responsive parenting approaches, such as positive parenting and mindful parenting, are effective in fostering inclusive attitudes in children, while authoritarian, permissive, or overly protective parenting style increase the risk of children adopting negative stereotypes. In addition, the collectivist culture that has developed in society can strengthen solidarity, but it also has the potential to foster exclusivity if it is not balanced with education on the value of tolerance. This study also found that fathers' involvement in parenting is still minimal, even though their role is important in building empathy and social justice. Another challenge arises from exposure to digital media, which, if unsupervised, can reinforce prejudice in children. Therefore, preventing discriminatory behavior in early childhood requires collaboration between families, educational institutions, and communities to create an inclusive and prejudice-free

learning environment. In the future, further research can focus on developing integrated family and school-based intervention programs to strengthen the values of tolerance and diversity from an early age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to the Early Childhood Islamic Education Graduate Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta for the academic support and facilities provided during the research and writing of this article. Thanks are also extended to all informants and families in Kertomulyo Village, Pati Regency, who were willing to take the time and provide valuable information for the smooth running of this research. The author would also like to express his appreciation to the supervising lecturers, fellow students, and other parties who have provided input, motivation, and assistance during the writing of this article.

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