The influence of parenting on building character in adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Character building in adolescents starts from childhood and continues throughout the life span. Character building in adolescents is associated with psychosocial development and is very important because it will be a strong foundation for their personality. The purpose of this study was to empirically test the influence of parenting on character building in adolescents. As many as 415 adolescents were involved in the study. The sampling technique used is Cluster Random Sampling. Tools used in this study are in the form of two scales, namely Character Building Scale and Parenting Scale. The scale of youth character building includes three indicators: peace, respect for difference, and awareness. The parenting scale consists of three indicators: parental cooperation, child tolerance, and warmth. Date are analyzed using Simple Regression Analysis. This study showed that, although less significant, parenting influences character building in adolescents. Understanding that the impact of parenting on character formation in adolescents is less critical, in character formation in adolescents it is therefore necessary to pay attention to other factors, namely schools and communities. This study also provides a strengthening understanding that adolescents with cheerful character receive positive social support from their social environment.

1. Introduction

Adolescents are an important asset of a nation. In the developmental stage, adolescence is a time that occurs after childhood and before entering adulthood. Adolescents tend to change and develop themselves according to social norms (Masselink et al., 2018). The definition of adolescents according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is as individuals between the ages of 10-19 years, and represents almost 20% of the population (Adigun, 2020; Todd and Black, 2020). Adolescence is the period in a human life span, and is the time with the highest risk among other life spans (Armitage et al., 2020). Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood (Sugiarti et al., 2020, 2021) accompanied by various changes, both physically, mentally and psychosocially (Ishashi et al., 2020). Adolescence is a critical phase too, especially for psychosocial development; because, at this time, there are behaviors and habits that are shaped and will be strengthened in the future (Williams et al., 2018). Adolescence is associated with a developmental period of rapid changes, where boys and girls present a greater level of vulnerability for risks, such as the increase for anti-social behavior and juvenile crime, drug consumption or school dropout, among others (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2016; Zilanawala et al., 2017). On the other hand, adolescents experience a variety of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development as a provision to be able to live independently in the community (Todd and Black, 2020).

Character in adolescents grows and develops in accordance with the socialization space of the youth concerned. Character itself is a representation of personality that appears to be behavior (Rezvani and Miri, 2021). The development of the youth character itself starts from childhood; parenting and family care. The family, especially parents, is important for the child’s self-development, including psychosocial development (Fang, 2018). Several theories have explained the phenomenon of delinquency and the associated factors with various psychological theories explaining that physical development, psychological conditions, environmental and family factors have a major influence on character development in adolescents (Munir and Malik, 2020).

Character during adolescence can be seen in daily behavior. Character as a part of behavior is built since childhood and which develops during their lifetime. Adolescents’ characters shown in the behavior can

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be various (Strand et al., 2020; Weisskirch, 2018). In this case, it is about how adolescents show peace, appreciate diversity, and have self-awareness related to themselves and their social environment (Rascher, 2010; Sanner and Neece, 2018).

1.1. Parenting and adolescents’ character building

Previous studies showed that parenting plays an important role in building character in adolescents. Parenting affects psychosocial development and behavior in adolescents (Sugiarti et al., 2021; Tulip et al., 2020). Parenting by parents plays an important role in building the adolescents’ characters (Banslosta et al., 2020; Smith-Adcock et al., 2019). Influenced by parents at home and strengthened as they get older (Huang et al., 2021; Lin and Chiao, 2020), adolescents will show their different characters. Whether they will be a person who likes peace, appreciates diversity, or shows their self-awareness of the social environment, it will develop as their social circle widens (Hart et al., 2019). Parents showing positive parenting will be modeled by their children (Green et al., 2018; Thoma et al., 2021). This means that adolescents who like warmthness, avoiding conflicts and controversy, consider that diversity is a normal thing; this generally comes from the parents who teach them so. To be an ideal adult person, there is a strong foundation from the past, namely youth and children (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2016). Adolescent psychosocial development is a major developmental task formed by the parenting of parents in earlier times (Leventhal et al., 2015; Weisskirch, 2018). This means that tough, characterful youth have a strong foothold as they enter adulthood and contribute to society. Teenagers with positive character are seen from the attitudes and behaviors they show. The environment plays an important role in educating children (Dolenc Orbanic and Kovač, 2021). Peace of mind, dislike of conflict, respect for others and the environment, and having good awareness are some of the attitudes and behaviors of adolescents with positive character. Such positive character will make teenagers easily socialize and be accepted by the public. Character building in adolescents can be implemented in various fields in society, including through daily living habits, rules, and various other things examples (Marini et al., 2019).

1.2. The influence of social environment in building adolescents’ characters

However, in reality not all teenagers grow, develop, and show such positive character. Many youth grow up and exhibit problem behavior (Karaer and Akdemir, 2019). Even though adolescents reach adulthood, it seems that not all adolescents can reach the stage of being competent (Garcia et al., 2019) and mature adults (Villarejo & Martinez-escudero, 2020). It can happen as teenagers get older; they expand their socialization function to the scope of the school, peers, community, and other wider socialization media, namely society. Many teenagers are aggressive, emotional, mischievous even extending up to criminal acts (Van Heel et al., 2019). Many are also teenagers who are less able to respect others, show self-respect, and lack empathy for others (Magnuson and Læftman, 2019; Van Heel et al., 2019). Furthermore, teenagers are also often encountered who lack awareness in socializing, are selfish and willing to win on their own. Even teenagers can influence each other to behave more antisocially (Ahmed et al., 2020). Important changes appear in adolescence as a decline in parental influence while peer influence increases. Adolescents tend to be involved in defiance (Martínez et al., 2021), especially when they are not supervised by their parents (Queiroz et al., 2020). Specifically, some deviant factors could be consuming alcohol and alcohol abuse (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2019) and other drugs (Fuentes et al., 2020), low school achievement (Garcia et al., 2020), lower self-esteem (Fuentes et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2020) and self-concept (Chen et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2021) and poor maturity (Villarejo & Martinez-escudero, 2020). In the theory of ecological systems with chronosystem models it shows how adolescents’ behavior is greatly influenced by and affects the environment in which they live over time (Ragelincé and Gronhøj, 2020).

How can teenagers have less respect for their peers, whether it's parents, older people, or people below their age? Adolescents like this can be categorized as teenagers who lack character or have negative character. Such behavior is referred to as problematic behavior (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2019) or negative character (Cooper et al., 2019). This negative character is very dangerous because it is not a strong foundation for the progress of a nation. Various studies have shown that problematic behavior in adolescents is often associated with parenting and other social resources (Fang, 2018; Khambari et al., 2018; Martins et al., 2020; Todd and Black, 2020).

1.3. Purpose of the research

Adolescents’ characters are built from childhood. Families and parents, as the first and primary environment, are the factors of basic character in adolescents. Parenting performed by cooperating provides tolerance and in a warm manner, and tends to make an adolescent as an individual who likes peace, has tolerance and appreciation (Garcia et al., 2020; Sugiarti et al., 2021). As adolescents get older, they widen their social circle. This also provides a consequence in the effect of environment on the development of adolescents’ characters. If the environment gives positive influences, their character will be strong. However, in contrast, if adolescents are in the wrong social circle, they will be individuals who are non-ideal, delinquent, like to consume alcohol and commit criminal behavior.

Based on the phenomenon regarding the problems above, the purpose of this research was to find out the influence of parenting on building adolescents’ characters. In addition, the research also explored the aspects of parenting and social circles playing an important role in building adolescents’ characters.

2. Methods

2.1. Research design

This research is quantitative research through surveys. The design of this survey research is designed to know and emphasize the determination of cause and effect relationships. Research was conducted from January 2021 to May 2021 in Semarang City. In a more specific manner, this research was a quantitative correlational study, whereby the researcher correlated two variables or more, namely independent variables and dependent variables. Further, the researcher used the correlation coefficient (statistical measure) to describe and measure the degree of the correlation between two variables or more or a collection of scores.

2.2. Population and samples

The population in this study was junior high school (junior high) students. The sampling technique in this study used cluster random sampling. Cluster sampling is a sampling technique in quantitative research, where researchers form several clusters or groups from the process of selecting subjects who are part of the research population. The groups of subjects in this study are groups of junior high schools (SMP). This SMP grouping is to make it easier for researchers to identify the origin of the research subject. In other words, the researcher divides the research subjects from SMP to SMP as there are both public and private junior high schools in Semarang. There are 21 junior high schools in this study; namely nine private junior high schools and 13 public junior high schools. After elimination, a total of 415 junior high school students participated as a sample of the study. The male sample was 164, and the female sample was 251. More female subjects were collected than male subjects. This grouping of male and female gender is limited to mapping demographic data only. Furthermore, the age range of the subjects in this study was from the youngest, 10 years, to 16 years. Most of the subjects were in the age range of 13 years.
2.3.1. Validity and reliability of instruments

Testing the validity of an item used the Product Moment Correlation technique which was then corrected using the Whole Part Correlation technique. The coefficient of validity of items on the Character Formation Scale ranges from 0.290 to 0.741 with a significance level of 0.05. The validity coefficient of items on the Parenting Scale ranges from 0.310 to 0.689 with a significance level of 0.05.

The reliability test of the research measuring instrument was conducted using the Cronbach’s alpha technique. The results of the character formation scale item reliability test obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.896. The Parental Care scale has a coefficient of 0.961. Based on the results of reliability calculations, both scales are reliable and can be used in research.

2.4. Procedures

The research was initiated by applying for permission to the Education Board of Semarang. After permission was approved, the researcher coordinated with the coordinator of guidance and counseling teachers of junior high schools in Semarang. The Scale of Character Education and the Scale of Parenting organized in Google Form were shared to the Guidance and Counseling teachers of junior high schools in Semarang. Both scales were distributed to the respondents for more than a week. The Character Formation Scale in Teens and the Parental Parenting Scale were shared with 415 students through Google Form. After the data from 415 teens were collected, they were analyzed using a simple linear regression analysis.

The peculiarity of psychological research is the process of conducting research involving humans and research outcomes that have an impact on humans. Therefore, the ethics of human research helps psychological research to remain empirical and safeguard human rights. If the researcher is not aware of it, psychological research in this area is prone to causing latent dangers; including the impact on research subjects both individually and institutionally. Therefore, human research ethics in psychological research and publication of research results are important to note. One way to ensure that researchers have applied the principles of human research ethics and research code of ethics is through an ethical clearance process. Ethical Clearance (EC) is a written statement given by the research ethics commission for research involving living things stating that the research is feasible after fulfilling certain requirements. Understanding this is necessary before the research is carried out; This research procedure has been ethically reviewed and has received a recommendation to be continued through the Psychological Ethics Committee.

Table 1 above shows the number of participants that differentiated by gender. The number of participants as many as 415 subjects. Male participants as many as 164 subjects and female participants as many as 251 subjects.

Table 2 above shows the number of participants that differentiated by age. The age range and number of participants is as follows: 1 participants aged 10 years, 2 participants aged 11 years, and 54 participants aged 12 years. Then participants with the age of 13 numbered 130 subjects, the age 14 numbered 106 subjects, the age 15 numbered 105 subjects and the age 17 numbered 7.

### Table 1. Statistics of research participants.

| Gender   | Respondent |
|----------|------------|
| Male     | 164        |
| Female   | 251        |
| Total    | 415        |

### Table 2. Distribution of participants’ age.

| Age | Participants |
|-----|--------------|
| 10  | 1            |
| 11  | 2            |
| 12  | 54           |
| 13  | 130          |
| 14  | 106          |
| 15  | 105          |
| 16  | 7            |
| Total| 415          |

### Table 3. The R square – influence of parenting on character formation.

| Model Summary |   |   |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1    | .305* | .090 | .088 | .30346 |

* Predictors: (Constant), Parenting

3. Result

The results of such simple linear regression analysis are seen in the calculations below.

In Table 3 above, The R Square of Influence of Parenting on Character Formation is 0.090. This means that the connection of the parenting as independent variables simultaneously against the character formation as dependent variable is known 0.090.

Based on the significance value (Sig.) of the Anova output, in Table 4 above; the Sign value is known. = 0.000 < 0.05. This means that parenting simultaneously affects character formation.

In Table 5 above, the coefficient in column B of Constant (a) is 3.281, while the character formation value (b) is 0.305. So that the regression model can be written as:

$$\bar{Y} = a + bX + \epsilon$$

$$\bar{Y} = 3.281 + 0.305X + \epsilon$$

This means that the addition of 1 unit of Parenting will be able to increase character formation by 3.586. The magnitude of influence can be seen in the following Table 6.

Table 6 above describes the magnitude of the correlation/relationship (R) value of 0.300. The percentage of the influence of parenting-free variables on character formation-bound variables is called the coefficient of determination (R Square), which is 0.090 = 9% This contains the understanding that the effect of parenting on character formation is 9%. The rest is influenced by other variables.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this research is to find out the influence of parenting on character building in adolescents. Based on the analysis of data found.
The study also provided the discovery that parents who work together in parenting make adolescents feel safe. Parents who can carry out good cooperation will have an impact on good mental and psychosocial development in adolescents (Fang, 2018; Huang et al., 2021). Cooperation in this case includes, for example, the father who acts as the head of the household, but still accompanies the child in learning. On the other hand, mother as a giver of affection at home is also able to replace the role of father when the father is not at home. Cheung et al. (2018) state that the role performed by parents appropriately will be taken up by the children they care for (Green et al., 2018). Adolescents with safe personalities will not exhibit behaviors that are contrary to their social norms. As we know, that adolescents begin to expand their socialization to a wider social environment. With behavior that is in accordance with social norms, adolescents can contribute more to society (Abdalla et al., 2020; Sugiarti et al., 2020).

This research also strengthens the understanding that parents who are tolerant of children, will show mutual respect for each other, especially in addressing differences. Tolerance is an attitude that parents have in allowing a difference of opinion from family members. The scope of the difference is quite broad, and includes differences of opinion, views, or beliefs (Moilanen and Lynn, 2019). An attitude of respect will create an atmosphere of peace and no action out of the boundaries of norms in society (Cheung et al., 2018). Parental tolerance of children is also shown from the example of behavior in general, among others respecting opinions about the thoughts of other family members, and helping each other to achieve the goals of the common good. The tolerant attitude that parents show internally will be an example for their children (Månnikko et al., 2020; Nikken, 2019), and will be applied in everyday life and will even continue when they become teenagers who expand their socialization (Kuppens and Ceulemans, 2019).

Warm parenting makes teenagers comfortable at home. Parents who nurture with affection will make teenagers become a subtle person and away from aggressive attitude (den Boer et al., 2021; Karaer and Adelmir, 2019). Giving praise for the efforts that have been done by children will build the child's confidence. Protecting children from physical and psychological trauma, including controlling the direction to the child for their mistakes, are warm attitudes shown by parents. Furthermore, warm parents will educate children with affection. The warm attitude of the parents will help develop nerve cells and the child's intelligence. Furthermore, not comparing children with other children, is one of the wise attitudes shown by parents (Salvador et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2021). With such a pattern of parenting, parents will help children to develop their psychosocial life well.

Therefore, warm parenting, parents who cooperate with each other and are tolerant of children will make children develop into peaceful individuals who can respect others and have good self-esteem (Keizer et al., 2019; Seim et al., 2021).

The results of this study also prove that parents who show positive parenting and give equal treatment to boys and girls will form the same character in both (Hertz and Barrios, 2021; Weiskirch, 2018). With positive parenting that is together, tolerant and warm, then the child will model their parents and will apply it in daily life, both with relatives and friends and it will be a strong basis for both male and female teenagers in expanding their relationship into adulthood (Martins et al., 2020; Ragelienė and Grunshøj, 2020; Sumargi et al., 2018). Parents who do not discriminate the treatment given in parenting can be said as parents who apply the principle that boys and girls are the same so that they have equal opportunity to grow and develop both mentally and psychologically (Sugiarti and Erlangga, 2017). Both teenage boys and girls have the opportunity to gain the breadth to develop in society and have a career in the future (Lee and Park, 2021; Sugiarti et al., 2021; Wirajaya et al., 2019).

The results of this study also prove that character building in adolescents is more influenced by other factors outside the family. Socialization is the concept of a lifelong learning process in which an individual studies the habits and cultures of society that include the way of life, values, and social norms contained in society in order to be accepted and

### Table 4. The results of regression analysis.

| ANOVA* |     | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Itself. |
|--------|-----|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1      | Regression | 3.758 | 1 | 3.758 | 40.809 | .000* |
|        | Residual   | 38.033 | 413 | .092     |       |         |
|        | Total      | 41.792 | 414 |           |       |         |

* Dependent Variable: Character. Formation.

### Table 5. The correlation coefficient of parenting and character formation.

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Itself. |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
|       | B                             | Std. Error                | Beta |         |
| 1     | (Constant)                    | 3.281                     | .200 | 16.405 | .000* |
|       | Parenting                    | .305                      | .048 | .300    | 6.388 | .000 |

* Dependent Variable: Character Formation.

### Table 6. The magnitude of the correlation/relationship (R) value.

| Model Summary | R  | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---------------|----|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1             | .300* | .090     | .088              | .00346                   |
actively participate in it (Huey et al., 2020; Žuković and Stojadinović, 2021). The theory of socialization in adolescents shows that adolescents expand their association as they get older. For adolescents, socialization serves as a guideline in learning to know and adjust to their environment, both values, norms, and social structures that exist in the community in the environment. Research also reinforces the understanding that character defects in adolescents are strongly influenced by the social environment of adolescents outside the home (Alm et al., 2019; Pringle et al., 2019; Ragaina and Granhøj, 2020; Verhoeven et al., 2019).

The implication of this study is that other factors to consider in character formation in adolescents are the broader social sources, namely, schools, friends and communities (Huey et al., 2020; Verhoeven et al., 2019). It is relevant to the duties of adolescents' development, namely relevant to their state as people get older and they start to widen their social circle. Schools become one of the socialization media by adolescents (Ahmed et al., 2020; Schoon et al., 2021). This is in line with the functions of school education as a socialization media, namely providing required knowledge and skills to develop the intellectual capacity to make adolescents as students have a decent life (Peter et al., 2020; Sandgot-Borgen et al., 2020). Furthermore, schools also form students’ personalities based on the values and norms in society. In other words, schools as a socialization agent (Adjum, 2020; Situmorang and Salim, 2021; Sugiarti et al., 2018) aim to form a mindset and behavior on a wide basis. In this case, adolescents as students will be given thinking skills, scientific knowledge, and the skills for living in a wider social atmosphere. A school is also a place for developing character education for students. Teachers as educators have a big responsibility for producing generations with good characters, cultures, and morals (Huber et al., 2020; Rezvani and Miri, 2021). Teachers are role models for students and have a big role in building students’ characters.

Besides schools and teachers, peers also play an important role in building adolescents’ characters (Kartyk-Cwik, 2020; Martinez et al., 2021; Schoon et al., 2021). Peers play a vital role for adolescents, primarily related to attitude, topics of discussion, interests, appearance, and behavior. Adolescents often judge that, if they wear the same fashion as things their popular group members wear, it is an opportunity for them to be accepted by their peers (Rascher, 2010; Žuković and Stojadinović, 2021).

In this case, an adolescent strongly needs to be selective in choosing their friends. The definition of peers is a friend, pal, or people who work together and do the same things (den Boer et al., 2021; Magnusson and Liéftman, 2019; Shofwan et al., 2019). A group of peers is an interaction with people with similarities in terms of age and status. Peers play a strong role in building adolescents’ characters. They can play a role in giving social and emotional support, social skills, an opportunity to learn to control themselves from being emotional, and can be a place to gain information outside their family (Zilanawala et al., 2017).

Peers can also provide positive values to adolescents by giving information about the comparison of their identities. Adolescents who are good at putting themselves in a good peer environment can develop their identity in a better or positive direction (Valkenburg et al., 2017; van Dijk et al., 2021).

However, attention needs to be paid when an adolescent mistakenly chooses peers. Peers that coincidentally have bad habits will transmit values deviating from the common values in society (Todd and Black, 2020). The mistakes in choosing peers can also lead to losing motivation to study, drug addiction, being involved in crimes, and they certainly will be isolated from surrounding people. If a group member tries to drink alcohol (Metser et al., 2019; van Dijk et al., 2021), consume illegal drugs or smoke, other adolescents will do the same without paying attention to their feelings and the effects (Hart et al., 2018; Livazović and Ham, 2019). It means that the influence of peers is strong on the development of the social relationship and education of adolescents. Adolescents who tend to mingle with their peers who frequently get drunk and use drugs will have a tendency to follow their lifestyle (Karaer and Akdemir, 2019; Khambati et al., 2018).

Although it has not been stated as absolute that the adolescents will follow their peers’ lifestyle, it needs to be realized that adolescence is a period of instability, both in the way of thinking and having principles in life (den Boer et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2021; Sugiarti et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion & implication

The conclusion in this study is that positive parenting shapes character in adolescents. Character building in adolescents is insignificantly influenced by parenting. Parents, through parenting, will shape the character of the child. In line with their development and age, children become teenagers and will expand their socialization. As a result, their psychosocial life is also developed. This happens because the psychosocial development of adolescents is influenced by the scope of their association.

The theoretical implication of this research is to provide a broad discourse for the development of theories in psychology, particularly Educational Psychology. Furthermore, the practical implications of this research in the practice of parenting and education in the family is that positive parenting has an impact and strong influence on character building in adolescents. With positive parenting that is together, tolerant and warm, the child will model their parents and will apply it in daily life with relatives, friends and it will be a strong basis for both male and female teenagers in expanding their relationships to adulthood.

The results of this study also prove that parents who show positive parenting and give equal treatment to boys and girls will form the same character in both. Parents who do not discriminate the treatment given in parenting can be said as parents who apply the principle that boys and girls are the same. Equal in this case means both have the opportunity to grow and develop, both mentally and psychosocially. Both teenage boys and girls have the opportunity to gain the breadth to develop in the community and have a career in the future.

The formation of adolescents’ characters is influenced by social sources. Social environments, school environments, and communities form the character of teenagers. Teenagers with a strong character will enable this in the life of society and youth with strong character will be a strong foundation for the future of a nation.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Rini Sugiarti: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.
Erwin Erlangga; Fendi Suhariadi; Mulya Virgonita I. Winta; Agung S. Pribadi: Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data.

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Data availability statement

Data will be made available on request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.
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