

The Role of Democratic Parenting Styles in Early Childhood Character Formation

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Democratic Parenting, Early Childhood, Child Character, Parental Involvement, Character Education

Received : 21 June

Revised : 23 July

Accepted: 23 August

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe democratic parenting styles, examine parents' roles in early childhood character formation, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method involving parents, teachers, and Group B children. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation from April to July 2026 and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings show that most parents applied democratic parenting through attention, affection, rules, communication, and guidance. Children demonstrated developing discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. Supporting factors included family harmony, parental involvement, communication, and school cooperation, while barriers included parental work demands, limited interaction time, and insufficient parenting knowledge. The study highlights democratic parenting as important for strengthening early childhood character development.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical period for character development because children experience rapid cognitive, social, emotional, and personality growth. During this period, the experiences children receive from their immediate environment can influence their subsequent development. The family, particularly parents, represents the first and most influential educational environment because children acquire many early experiences through interactions with parents and other family members. Therefore, appropriate parenting practices and family involvement are important components of early childhood education and character formation. Previous studies have shown that quality parenting interventions and practices can contribute positively to children's cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development (Jeong et al., 2021; Prime et al., 2023).

Democratic parenting is particularly relevant to early childhood character development because it emphasizes a balance between rules, warmth, communication, affection, and responsiveness to children's needs. Parents do not merely control children's behavior but also provide guidance, emotional support, opportunities for independence, and appropriate behavioral models. According to Santrock (2020), democratic parenting involves warmth, communication, and responsiveness while maintaining clear behavioral boundaries. Empirical studies have also demonstrated positive associations between democratic or authoritative parenting and children's learning outcomes, independence, discipline, social skills, and emotional development (Kong & Yasmin, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2023; Oktiawangsari et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2023). These findings indicate that parenting practices constitute an important social context for developing positive character during early childhood.

Parental involvement further strengthens the process of character formation because children's development occurs through continuous interaction between home and school. Parental involvement is associated with children's academic competence, social skills, behavior, self-efficacy, and school readiness (Yizengaw, 2024; Cai et al., 2024). The quality of parental interaction is also more important than merely the amount of time spent with children, as meaningful communication and shared activities can support children's development (Tian et al., 2024). Thus, character education should not be regarded solely as the responsibility of educational institutions. Cooperation between parents and teachers is needed to create consistent environments that reinforce discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, cooperation, and positive social behavior.

Nevertheless, the ideal conditions described in previous research are not always reflected in everyday family and school contexts. Some parents may still apply parenting practices that are overly permissive, excessively restrictive, or insufficiently responsive to children's developmental needs. Such conditions may affect children's behavioral and emotional regulation (Zhai et al., 2024). Parental work demands and limited interaction time may further reduce opportunities for consistent guidance, communication, stimulation, and character formation. Initial observations conducted at PAUD Nursaadah 1,

Lebak, Banten, from April 12–16, 2026, involving 18 Group B children, revealed several character-related problems, including undisciplined behavior, low self-confidence, difficulties in cooperation, and limited social interaction. Interviews with teachers and parents indicated that inconsistent parenting, limited parental time, and insufficient communication between families and schools were among the factors associated with these conditions.

Although previous studies have examined parenting, parental involvement, and child development, a more specific understanding of how democratic parenting contributes to character formation in the particular context of PAUD Nursaadah 1 remains necessary. The present study contributes to knowledge by examining democratic parenting not only as a general parenting practice but also in relation to specific character dimensions, namely discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. The study also considers the supporting and inhibiting factors surrounding parenting practices and the role of cooperation between parents and teachers. This contextual focus provides an empirical picture of how democratic parenting is implemented in a specific early childhood educational setting and how differences in parenting practices may be reflected in children's everyday character.

The importance of this study is further supported by the theoretical perspective that character is not formed instantly but develops continuously through habituation and interaction with the child's immediate environment. Parents serve as role models, while teachers and schools provide complementary experiences that can reinforce character values (Berk, 2021). Democratic parenting that combines clear rules with warmth, communication, guidance, and opportunities for independence is therefore expected to provide an environment conducive to positive character development (Santrock, 2020). In contrast, inappropriate parenting may contribute to difficulties in self-control, self-confidence, and social interaction (Rahim, 2021; Rafiola et al., 2022). Accordingly, examining parenting practices within the actual social and educational context of PAUD Nursaadah 1 can enrich the understanding of the relationship between family practices and early childhood character formation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to describe the democratic parenting patterns applied by parents in educating early childhood, examine the role of parents in forming children's character, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors associated with democratic parenting and their impact on children's character at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democratic Parenting Theory

Democratic parenting, commonly associated with the authoritative parenting style, refers to a parenting approach that balances parental control with warmth, responsiveness, communication, and opportunities for children to develop independence. Santrock (2020) explains that effective democratic parenting involves clear rules and behavioral expectations while maintaining emotional support and responsiveness to children's needs. In this approach, parents function not only as controllers but also as guides and role models who encourage children to express opinions, make appropriate choices, and understand the consequences of their behavior. The theoretical foundation of democratic parenting is closely related to Baumrind's parenting-style framework, which emphasizes the importance of balancing demandingness and responsiveness in parenting.

The family is the first social environment in which children learn values, behavioral norms, communication patterns, and emotional responses. Therefore, the quality of parent-child interaction has an important role in shaping children's development, (Yon A.E. et al., 2026). Jeong et al. (2021), through a global systematic review and meta-analysis, found that responsive parenting and parental support for learning are important for promoting early child development. This perspective is consistent with Berk (2021), who emphasizes that children acquire behavioral patterns through interactions with significant adults and by observing and imitating their behavior. Consequently, democratic parenting provides children with opportunities to experience consistent guidance while simultaneously developing autonomy and positive social behavior.

Democratic Parenting and Child Self-Regulation

One important mechanism through which democratic parenting may influence children's character is self-regulation. Self-regulation refers to children's ability to control emotions, attention, impulses, and behavior in accordance with situational demands. Family experiences and parenting practices contribute to the development of these abilities. Research by Li et al. (2022) found that self-regulation mediated the relationship between authoritative parenting and preschool readiness, including children's ability to follow classroom rules, learning dispositions, and social competence.

The development of self-regulation is also supported by positive behavioral control, appropriate limit-setting, and parental guidance. A meta-review by Doebel et al. (2023) demonstrates that children's self-regulatory abilities develop continuously and are shaped by socialization processes. Supportive parental control can encourage children to comply with expectations, whereas harsh and intrusive control may be associated with less adaptive regulatory outcomes. Therefore, democratic parenting can be theoretically understood as an environment that provides children with boundaries while allowing them to gradually internalize behavioral rules.

Democratic Parenting and Character Formation

Character development in early childhood involves the gradual formation of behavioral values that are expressed through children's daily actions. In this study, character formation is specifically examined through discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. Discipline involves the ability to follow rules and responsibilities, self-confidence reflects children's belief in their own abilities, while social skills involve the ability to interact, cooperate, communicate, and share with others.

The relationship between parenting and character development has received empirical support. Novitasari et al. (2022) found that authoritative parenting had a positive and statistically significant influence on children's character development. Similarly, Hidayat et al. (2023) reported an association between democratic parenting and the development of independence in early childhood, while Oktanawangsari et al. (2023) identified a significant relationship between democratic parenting and discipline among children aged 4–5 years. These findings suggest that children who experience warmth, guidance, consistent expectations, and opportunities for participation are more likely to develop positive behavioral characteristics.

Democratic parenting is also relevant to children's social and emotional development. Research on fathers' parenting behaviors found that parenting behavior was associated with young children's social competence, with children's self-regulation functioning as an important mediating factor (Oh & Na, 2023). In addition, a meta-analysis by Morris et al. (2021) showed that parents' modeling, responses to children's emotions, and instruction about emotions were positively associated with children's emotional competencies. Thus, communication, emotional responsiveness, and behavioral modeling within democratic parenting can provide children with experiences that support confidence, emotional control, cooperation, and positive interaction.

Parental Involvement and Character Development

Democratic parenting cannot be separated from parental involvement. Parental involvement includes accompanying children, communicating with them, participating in learning activities, providing guidance, and cooperating with teachers. Yizengaw (2024) found that parental involvement in preschool education was associated with children's developmental outcomes, including academic competence, social skills, and behavior. Similarly, research on family engagement in pre-kindergarten indicates that communication between teachers and families can be associated with children's early learning and socio-emotional outcomes, although the relationships may vary according to child, family, and program characteristics (Family engagement practices..., 2024).

Parental involvement is particularly important because character formation requires consistency between children's home and school environments. Bierman et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of family engagement and parent-focused approaches in promoting children's social-emotional school readiness. Therefore, cooperation between parents and teachers can strengthen the consistency of expectations and behavioral habituation experienced by children.

Democratic Parenting and Social-Emotional Development

The social-emotional dimension is an important component of early childhood character. Mondy et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of promoting social-emotional learning from early childhood because these competencies provide foundations for children's subsequent adjustment and development. Research on preschool self-regulation interventions also indicates that strengthening self-regulation can support children's social skills while reducing problematic behaviors (Ezmeci & Akman, 2023). These findings reinforce the theoretical assumption that parenting practices that provide warmth, guidance, emotional support, and appropriate boundaries can create conditions conducive to children's social-emotional development.

A recent study specifically examining democratic parenting in early childhood reported that democratic parenting contributed positively to children's character development, although the outcomes differed among children depending on the consistency, quality, and responsiveness of its implementation. This finding is important because it demonstrates that democratic parenting should not be understood merely as the presence of rules or freedom, but as a balanced interaction between parental guidance, affection, communication, and responsiveness.

Theoretical Synthesis

Based on the literature, democratic parenting can be conceptualized as a parenting approach characterized by warmth, responsiveness, communication, consistent rules, guidance, parental involvement, and opportunities for children's independence. These characteristics provide an environment in which children can gradually internalize behavioral standards rather than simply obeying external commands. Through repeated interaction and habituation, democratic parenting may contribute to children's discipline, self-confidence, self-regulation, cooperation, and social competence.

The literature also indicates that the relationship between parenting and character is influenced by contextual factors, including parental involvement, family routines, communication, parental understanding, and cooperation between parents and educational institutions. Thus, the present study contributes a contextual understanding of democratic parenting by examining its implementation and its relationship with discipline, self-confidence, and social skills among Group B children at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten. The study further examines supporting and inhibiting factors that may influence the effectiveness of democratic parenting in everyday family and school contexts. This focus provides a more specific empirical picture than studies that examine parenting or child development only in general terms.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method conducted in a natural setting, where the researcher directly observed phenomena related to parenting patterns and children's character development. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on meaning, process, and social interaction between parents and children in their daily lives (Creswell, 2021). The research was conducted through four main stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and conclusion drawing. The preparation stage involved identifying the research problem, conducting a literature review, drafting the research proposal, and preparing research instruments, including observation guides, interview guides, and documentation sheets. The data collection stage involved gathering field data through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis stage consisted of organizing, categorizing, and interpreting the collected data to identify meanings relevant to the research focus. Finally, the conclusion-drawing stage involved formulating conclusions systematically based on the results of the data analysis. The research was conducted at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten, over approximately three months, from April to July.

Research Subjects

Because this study employed a qualitative approach, the researcher selected research subjects and data sources rather than determining a statistical population and sample. The primary data sources consisted of parents, teachers, and children in Group B. Parents served as the main informants because they provided information regarding the parenting patterns applied in their children's daily lives. The teacher provided additional information concerning children's character development within the school environment. Meanwhile, the children in Group B were observed directly to identify their behavioral and character development, particularly in terms of discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. In addition to these primary sources, secondary data were obtained from the school profile, children's developmental records, and documentation of learning activities at PAUD Nursaadah 1. The combination of these sources was intended to provide a comprehensive description of parenting practices and their relationship to children's character development in both the home and school environments.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly to identify children's behaviors related to discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. The observation process was guided by a previously prepared observation instrument to ensure that the data collected remained consistent with the research focus. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format with parents and the teacher. This technique was used to obtain in-depth information regarding parenting practices and their role in children's character formation. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to use predetermined questions while providing opportunities to explore additional information emerging during the interviews. Documentation was used to collect supporting evidence, including photographs,

children's developmental records, and other documents relevant to the research. The use of these three techniques enabled the researcher to obtain data from different perspectives and sources.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model (Miles et al., 2020), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the field data according to the research focus. At this stage, information that was considered relevant to parenting patterns and children's character development was identified and organized, while less relevant information was set aside. The reduced data were then presented through descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and identification of important findings. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the data. This interactive process was conducted continuously throughout the research to ensure that the conclusions were supported by the collected evidence.

Data Validity

The validity of the research data was ensured through triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained through different data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher also compared information obtained from different informants, particularly parents and teachers, to examine the consistency of the findings. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with the respondents to ensure that the information recorded and interpreted by the researcher accurately reflected the actual conditions (Creswell, 2021). Through these procedures, the researcher sought to increase the credibility and accuracy of the findings regarding parenting patterns and children's character development.

RESEARCH RESULT

Democratic Parenting Patterns Applied by Parents

The research findings indicate that the majority of parents at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten, apply democratic parenting in educating and guiding their children. This parenting pattern is characterized by a balance between rules and freedom, attention and affection, open communication, and opportunities for children to develop independence. Parents generally establish simple rules at home, such as tidying up toys after playing, maintaining cleanliness, greeting others, speaking politely, and respecting family members. Rather than merely demanding obedience, parents tend to explain the reasons behind rules so that children can understand and follow them consciously.

Two-way communication was also found to be an important characteristic of democratic parenting. Parents provide opportunities for children to express their feelings, wishes, and opinions and respond to them appropriately. Positive behavior is reinforced through praise, attention, and appreciation. Parents also give children opportunities to make simple choices and complete age-appropriate tasks independently while providing assistance when necessary. These findings demonstrate that democratic parenting at PAUD Nursaadah 1 is

implemented through a combination of guidance, warmth, communication, positive reinforcement, and support for children's independence.

Although democratic parenting was dominant, the research also identified permissive and authoritarian practices among some parents. Permissive practices were reflected in parents' tendency to give in to children's wishes without establishing clear boundaries, while authoritarian practices were characterized by excessive restrictions and rigid rules with limited two-way communication. These differences were associated with variations in children's behavior, particularly discipline and self-confidence.

Table 1. Findings on Parenting Patterns

Parenting Pattern	Main Characteristics	Observed Impact on Children
Democratic	Clear rules, explanation, affection, two-way communication, praise, and opportunities for independence	More disciplined, confident, and socially engaged
Permissive	Excessive freedom and limited boundaries	Difficulty following rules and developing responsibility
Authoritarian	Strict restrictions, rigid rules, and limited communication	Lower confidence and reluctance to express opinions

The Role of Parents in Children's Character Formation

The findings show that parents have an important role in developing children's character, particularly in the areas of discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. Parents serve as children's first educators and role models through daily habits, communication, emotional support, and behavioral examples. The character development observed at school was closely related to experiences and habits established in the home environment.



Figure. 1. Interviewing Parents

In relation to discipline, parents establish simple routines such as tidying toys, washing hands before eating, greeting others, and following daily schedules. Children who receive consistent guidance and habituation tend to

demonstrate better compliance with school rules and greater responsibility for simple tasks. This finding indicates that discipline develops gradually through repeated habits rather than through occasional instruction.

In terms of self-confidence, children who receive opportunities to express opinions, choose activities, and communicate their feelings tend to demonstrate greater confidence. They are more willing to participate in classroom activities and appear in front of their peers. Conversely, children who receive limited emotional support or are frequently restricted tend to be more hesitant and less willing to express their opinions.

Regarding social skills, children who regularly communicate and interact positively with their parents tend to demonstrate better cooperation with peers. They are more willing to share, help friends, and participate in group activities. The findings also indicate that communication and cooperation between parents and teachers are important in maintaining consistent character development between the home and school environments.

Table 2. Role of Parents in Children's Character Formation

Character Aspect	Parenting Practices	Findings in Children
Discipline	Establishing routines, rules, responsibilities, and consistent habits	Children are more able to follow rules and complete simple responsibilities
Self-confidence	Giving opportunities to express opinions, make choices, and providing emotional support	Children are more confident in speaking and participating in activities
Social skills	Communication, playing together, sharing, helping, and modeling positive behavior	Children demonstrate better cooperation and participation in group activities

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The research identified several factors that support the implementation of democratic parenting. These include harmonious family relationships, parental involvement in children's activities, effective parent-child communication, and cooperation between parents and the school. A harmonious family environment provides children with a sense of security and comfort, while parental involvement strengthens emotional relationships and helps children feel valued and supported.

Cooperation between parents and teachers is also important because consistent communication allows both environments to reinforce similar behavioral expectations. When parents and teachers communicate effectively, children's character development can be supported through consistent habits at home and at school.



Figure 2. Interviewing Teachers

However, several inhibiting factors were identified. The most prominent were parents' work commitments, limited time with children, and insufficient understanding of appropriate parenting practices. Limited parental time can reduce opportunities for communication, supervision, and emotional interaction. In addition, differences in parents' understanding of parenting may result in practices that are either overly permissive or excessively restrictive.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Factors	Findings
Supporting factors	Harmonious family relationships; parental involvement; good parent-child communication; cooperation between parents and teachers
Inhibiting factors	Parents' work commitments; limited time with children; limited understanding of appropriate parenting practices
Character-related impact	Consistent positive parenting supports discipline, self-confidence, independence, and social skills; less optimal parenting is associated with difficulties in following rules, low confidence, and limited social interaction

Impact of Parenting Patterns on Children's Character

The findings indicate that the quality and consistency of parenting are reflected in children's behavior in the school environment. Children who receive positive, attentive, and consistent democratic parenting generally demonstrate better discipline, confidence, and social interaction. They are more willing to follow classroom rules, complete simple responsibilities, participate in activities, communicate with peers, and cooperate during group activities.

In contrast, children whose parenting experiences are less consistent may demonstrate difficulties such as not following classroom rules, leaving toys after use, being reluctant to complete assigned tasks, showing limited self-confidence, and experiencing difficulties in cooperating with peers. These findings suggest that parenting practices constitute an important environmental factor in children's character formation.

Table 4. Summary of Research Findings

Research Focus	Main Finding	Character Implication
Democratic parenting	Parents provide rules together with explanations, affection, communication, and freedom within boundaries	Supports positive character development
Parental role	Parents act as role models, educators, and guides through daily habits	Strengthens discipline and responsibility
Emotional support	Children are given opportunities to communicate and express opinions	Supports self-confidence
Social interaction	Parents encourage communication, sharing, helping, and cooperation	Supports children's social skills
Parent-school cooperation	Communication between parents and teachers supports consistency	Strengthens continuity of character development
Parenting barriers	Work demands, limited time, and insufficient parenting knowledge	May reduce consistency of character formation
Less optimal parenting	Excessive restriction or excessive freedom	May contribute to low discipline, confidence, and social interaction

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that democratic parenting is the dominant parenting pattern identified at PAUD Nursaadah 1. Its main characteristics are the balance between rules and freedom, warm parent-child relationships, two-way communication, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for independence. These practices are associated with positive manifestations of children's discipline, self-confidence, and social skills. At the same time, the findings highlight that parenting effectiveness is influenced by family conditions, parental availability, parenting knowledge, and cooperation between parents and the school.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that democratic parenting is the dominant parenting pattern practiced by parents of children at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten. This pattern is reflected in parents' efforts to establish clear rules while providing explanations, affection, opportunities for communication, appreciation, and age-appropriate independence. Parents do not simply demand obedience but tend to involve children in communication and provide reasons for behavioral expectations. This finding is consistent with the view that democratic parenting emphasizes warmth, responsiveness, communication, and appropriate control, which allows children to understand rules while developing autonomy. The findings also support previous research showing that positive parenting patterns

contribute to children's character development, particularly discipline and responsibility.

The study further shows that parents play an important role in developing children's character through habituation, modeling, emotional support, and daily interaction. Children who experience consistent guidance at home tend to demonstrate positive behaviors at school, including following rules, completing simple responsibilities, interacting with peers, sharing, and participating in group activities. In addition, opportunities to express opinions and make simple choices appear to support children's self-confidence. This finding is in line with Pratiwi et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of parental emotional support and effective communication in strengthening children's self-confidence. It is also consistent with Hidayat and Nurhasanah (2022), who found that positive parenting is associated with better social abilities among young children. Thus, character formation should be understood as a continuous process in which family experiences provide an important foundation for children's behavior and social development in educational settings.

Another important finding concerns the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing parenting practices. Harmonious relationships between parents and children, parental involvement in children's activities, effective communication, and cooperation between parents and teachers were identified as important supporting factors. Conversely, parents' work commitments, limited time with children, and insufficient communication may reduce the consistency of parenting practices. These findings suggest that democratic parenting cannot be separated from the broader family environment. Even when parents understand the importance of positive parenting, practical constraints may affect their ability to consistently accompany and communicate with their children. Therefore, cooperation between families and schools is important to maintain continuity in character development. Schools can support parents by providing communication, guidance, and opportunities for parents to understand children's developmental needs and appropriate parenting strategies.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that democratic parenting contributes to the development of positive character among early childhood learners through a combination of clear boundaries, affection, communication, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for independence. The observed character development includes discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and social interaction. The findings strengthen the argument that character education in early childhood should not be viewed solely as a responsibility of educational institutions but as a shared process involving families and schools. Democratic parenting provides children with both structure and emotional security, enabling them to understand expectations while gradually developing independence and social competence. Therefore, consistent collaboration between parents and teachers is recommended to strengthen the continuity of character formation across home and school environments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that democratic parenting plays an important role in the formation of character among early childhood children at PAUD Nursaadah 1, Lebak, Banten. Democratic parenting is characterized by the implementation of clear and age-appropriate rules accompanied by affection, attention, open communication, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for children to develop independence. Rather than relying on punishment or excessive control, parents provide explanations and guidance so that children understand the reasons behind expected behaviors.

The study further shows that parental involvement contributes to the development of children's discipline, self-confidence, responsibility, independence, and social skills. Consistent habituation at home, such as following rules, tidying up toys, completing simple tasks, and communicating politely, is reflected in children's behavior at school. Children who receive emotional support and opportunities to express opinions and make simple choices tend to demonstrate greater confidence and willingness to participate in classroom and social activities. Positive interaction between parents and children also supports children's ability to cooperate, share, communicate, and interact with peers.

The implementation of democratic parenting is influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors. Harmonious family relationships, parental involvement, effective communication, and cooperation between parents and teachers support the development of children's character. In contrast, parents' work commitments, limited time with children, and inadequate understanding of appropriate parenting practices may reduce the consistency of character education. These findings confirm that character formation is not solely the responsibility of the school but requires continuity between the family and educational environment.

Recommendations and Implementation

Based on the findings, parents are recommended to consistently apply democratic parenting by establishing clear and reasonable rules while maintaining warmth, open communication, and respect for children's opinions. Parents should provide children with opportunities to make simple decisions, complete age-appropriate responsibilities, and learn from the consequences of their actions. Daily activities such as tidying toys, maintaining personal hygiene, helping with simple household tasks, and communicating politely can be used as practical opportunities for character habituation.

Teachers and PAUD institutions are recommended to strengthen collaboration with parents through regular communication, parenting programs, and simple home-school character development activities. Teachers can provide parents with practical examples of strategies for developing discipline, self-confidence, responsibility, independence, and social skills. Consistency between expectations at home and at school is important so that children receive similar messages and behavioral guidance in both environments.

The findings can also be implemented through a simple home-school character development program. The program may include weekly character targets, such as following rules, completing responsibilities, expressing opinions confidently, sharing with peers, and cooperating in group activities. Parents and teachers can document children's progress and discuss challenges periodically. This approach can help ensure that character development is implemented continuously rather than only during classroom activities.

For future researchers, further studies are recommended to involve a wider range of participants and settings to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of democratic parenting and early childhood character development. Future research may also combine qualitative findings with quantitative measurements or longitudinal observations to examine changes in children's character development over a longer period. Such studies could provide stronger evidence regarding the consistency and sustainability of democratic parenting practices in different family and educational contexts.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research used a qualitative descriptive approach and was conducted in a single early childhood education institution, PAUD Nursaadah 1, so the findings primarily reflect the specific social and educational context of the research setting and cannot be generalized broadly. Second, the data relied mainly on observations, interviews, and documentation involving parents, teachers, and children, which may be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions and the researcher's interpretation. The relatively limited research period may also have constrained the opportunity to observe changes in parenting practices and children's character development over a longer period.

Further research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse range of participants and early childhood education institutions to obtain broader perspectives on the role of democratic parenting in character development. Future studies could also employ a mixed-methods or longitudinal design to examine the relationship between parenting patterns and children's character development more systematically over time. In addition, subsequent research may explore other influencing factors, such as family socioeconomic conditions, parental education, digital media use, and the consistency of parenting between home and school. Such studies would strengthen the empirical evidence regarding effective parenting strategies for developing children's discipline, self-confidence, independence, and social skills.

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