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Research Paper

Parenting Styles and Cognitive Autonomy Among Indonesian Adolescents

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Abstract

Autonomy is one of the critical developmental tasks in adolescence, however, research frequently focuses on the behavioral and emotional aspects. Meanwhile, the cognitive aspect of autonomy is equally important to be examined and promoted. Hence, this study aimed to examine the relationship between parenting style as a factor that significantly plays a role in the development of adolescent independence, and cognitive autonomy. This study involved 308 high-school Indonesian adolescents (58.1% female, 41.9% male). We used multiple regression analysis to examine the hypotheses. The study found that supportive parenting (warmth, structure, and autonomy support) was significantly associated with cognitive autonomy ($p<0.001$), while unsupportive parenting (rejection, chaos, and coercion) did not correlate with cognitive autonomy. In addition, there was no difference between male and female adolescents in cognitive autonomy levels. These results can be further utilized for future research and/or to develop intervention programs for adolescents' ability to think independently.

Keywords: *Parenting Styles, Cognitive Autonomy, Adolescents, Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, a period when the transition from childhood to adulthood occurs, is a time when various critical developmental tasks are accomplished. Throughout adolescence, there are significant biological, cognitive, and social changes as individuals strive to achieve greater autonomy (Hill, 1983). One of the critical developmental tasks for adolescents is to establish identity and develop autonomy while maintaining a healthy relationship with their parents at the same time (Buist 2016). Autonomy is one of the psychosocial developmental issues related to independence, choice, volition, and regulation of behavior, emotions, and cognition (Zimmer-Gembeck & Ducat 2011).

The development of autonomy in adolescents involves increasing self-reliance, which is indicated by the emergence of different opinions from authority figures such as parents, more organized personal experiences, and the emergence of abilities such as regulating behavior, directing goals, and making decisions independently based on personal experience without parental or adult support in their surroundings (Yeh et al. 2007). In addition, adolescents who are trying to become autonomous also demonstrate various changes in their daily behavior such as, for example, those who previously only agreed to their parents' opinions, began to compare their parents' opinions with the opinions of other figures such as friends, teachers, or with themselves, or began to leave the house without having to always inform their parents about their location.

Autonomy in adolescents can be seen in how adolescents can act, feel, and think autonomously, or in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive autonomy (Beckert 2005, 2007; Steinberg 2020). These three aspects have interactive reciprocal relationships. developmentally, an individual becomes behaviorally autonomous in childhood, emotionally autonomous in early adolescence, and cognitively autonomous in late adolescence. Thus, autonomy develops from behavior, emotions, and then cognition, therefore it could be said that if individuals succeed in being behaviorally independent in childhood, they tend to feel more autonomous and eventually think autonomously (Beckert 2005). These three aspects of autonomy are important for the

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formation of adolescents' autonomy. However, studies on adolescent independence usually focus more on emotional autonomy and behavioral autonomy. Research in adolescents' cognitive autonomy, which is related to cognitive aspects, is a complex issue, so the believed understanding in adolescents' cognitive autonomy is that adolescents can be autonomous in thinking after being in late adolescence after formal operational thought is formed (Beckert 2005).

In the past few years, there have been several studies examining cognitive autonomy and the varying determinants, including personal factors such as age, gender, chronic illness, and disability (Dashiff & Bartolucci, 2002; Lee & Beckert, 2012; Michael & Attias, 2016; Mihăiță et al., 2023), social factors such as parental care, family support, and cognitive autonomy (Dashiff & Bartolucci 2002; Lee & Beckert 2012; Michael & Attias, 2016; Mihăiță et al., 2023), social factors such as parental care, support from family, friends and partners, opportunities provided by parents for children to make decisions, parental separation anxiety, and teaching styles (Abdullah et al. 2020; Dashiff & Bartolucci, 2002; Dashiff & Weaver 2008; Kaur et al., 2019; Michael & Attias, 2016), and cultural factors, such as differences in cultural expectations for the development of cognitive autonomy in male and female adolescents (Lee et al., 2010). The results showed that a strong influencing factor on the development of adolescent cognitive autonomy is the social environment where adolescents live, which is from the family, especially parents (Dashiff et al. 2009; Dashiff & Weaver 2008; Hill & Wang, 2015; Kaur et al., 2019; Lee & Beckert, 2012).

Parents play a significant role in the development of adolescents' autonomy. Some studies also state that various factors from parents can support or hinder the development of emotional and behavioral autonomy, such as parenting styles, children's relationships with parents in the family, children's perceptions of their relationships with their parents, and attachment between children and parents (Chan & Chan, 2009; Huiberts et al., 2006; Parra et al., 2009; Valentina & Gulati 2014).

Parents are the social context with a significant impact on adolescents' development, abilities, and well-being (Costa et al., 2019). Parental influence on children can be seen from three aspects, including parenting goals, parenting styles, and behaviors shown to achieve parenting goals (Darling & Steinberg 1993). Parenting styles and practices are often interpreted as the same, but they are different because parenting styles focus more on how parents do parenting. In contrast, parenting practices focus more on the actual behavior displayed by parents (Power, 2013).

Parenting styles can be studied through two main approaches, the dimensional approach which examines each parenting dimension separately, and the typological approach which combines specific parenting dimensions into parenting styles (Power, 2013). Six forms of parenting behavior reflect six different dimensions, which are warmth, structure, and autonomy support combined into supportive parenting, and the dimensions of rejection, chaos, and coercion combined into unsupportive parenting (Skinner et al., 2005).

Previous research has examined the relationship between parenting styles and the development of cognitive autonomy in adolescents, suggesting that parents who adopt authoritative parenting styles are more likely to support adolescents' cognitive autonomy development than authoritarian or permissive parenting styles (Kaur et al., 2019). While earlier research has investigated the correlation between parenting styles and cognitive autonomy employing a typological approach, our study adopts a dimensional approach, focusing on the association between supportive and unsupportive parenting styles, and cognitive autonomy in adolescents. We hypothesized that supportive parenting would correlate positively with cognitive autonomy, while unsupportive parenting would correlate negatively with cognitive autonomy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to an individual's capacity to do things on their own (Steinberg, 2020). The term autonomy is often used interchangeably with independence, but in the context of adolescent studies, the two have slightly different meanings. While the development of independence is part of becoming autonomous during adolescence, autonomy includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. Emotional autonomy involves a reduction in emotional dependence on parents (McElhaney et al., 2009). Behavioral autonomy refers to learning how to act autonomously (Steinberg, 2020). Cognitive autonomy involves the ability to rely on oneself without excessive social validation (Zimmer-Gembeck & Ducat, 2011).

All three aspects of autonomy play a significant role in individual development from adolescence into adulthood. The process of autonomy development does not only occur at one point in time but can generally occur throughout individual development (Steinberg, 2020). This study focuses on an aspect of autonomy that has received less attention in the research context, that is cognitive autonomy.

Cognitive Autonomy

Cognitive autonomy is the ability to evaluate their thinking or evaluative thinking, voice opinions, make decisions or decision-making, self-assess, and utilize comparative validations (Beckert, 2007). Evaluative thinking is the ability to assess one's thought processes and make logical deductions (Miller & Byrnes, 2001). Voicing opinions is the ability to express one's personal views (Reed & Spicer, 2003). Making decisions refers to the ability to make decisions and consider alternatives, as well as the outcomes (Reyna, 2004). Self-assessing is the ability to perform self-evaluation and self-reflection (Peetsma, et al., 2005). Comparative validation is the ability to utilize comparison for validation (Bednar & Fisher, 2003).

Parenting Styles

Parenting dimensions are features, qualities, and descriptive schemes used to describe the nature of parenting. There are six main dimensions of parenting, namely warmth, structure, and autonomy support which are included in parenting behaviors that can support child development, and rejection, chaos, and coercion which are included in parenting behaviors that can hinder child development (Skinner et al., 2005).

Warmth refers to expressions of affection, love, appreciation, kindness, and care, which include emotional availability, support, and sincere care. Structure refers to providing clear expectations for mature behavior, along with consistent and appropriate boundary setting. Autonomy support refers to giving children independence of choice and expression, as well as providing genuine appreciation, and encouraging children to discover, explore, and express their views, goals, and preferences.

Rejection refers to expressions of dislike, hostility, harshness, over-reactive, irritability, and excessive, and shows clear negative feelings towards children such as criticism, reproach, and disapproval. Chaos refers to a lack of structure, with behaviors that are inconsistent, unpredictable, and unreliable, which can interfere with or get in the way of achieving goals. Coercion refers to overly strict restrictions on children, which must be obeyed, or excessive control.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Method

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between parenting styles, which were divided into supportive and unsupportive parenting, with cognitive autonomy in adolescents.

This study was conducted cross-sectionally. The instrument used to obtain an overview of adolescents' cognitive autonomy is the Cognitive Autonomy and Self-Evaluation (CASE©) Inventory developed by Beckert (2007). This questionnaire is used to measure the ability to think independently in adolescents. This questionnaire consists of 27 items describing evaluative thinking, voicing opinions, making decisions, self-assessing, and comparative validation. The response options for each item are given in the form of a Likert scale, with 5 points from never, rated 1, to always, rated 5, and strongly disagree, rated 1, to strongly agree, rated 5. The researchers' role in this questionnaire is to adapt and validate it to be used in the Indonesian adolescent population. The items in the instrument are divided into 21 positive items and 6 negative items that are reversed scoring.

The instrument used to obtain a description of supportive and unsupportive parenting styles is the Parent as Social Context Questionnaire (PSCQ) - Adolescent which was adapted and validated in the Indonesian version by Abidin et al. (2019) This questionnaire is an adaptation of the PSCQ - Adolescent developed by Skinner et al. (2005), which consists of 24 items, with 12 items for supportive parenting (warmth, structure, and autonomy support) and 12 items for unsupportive parenting (rejection, chaos, and coercion). The answer options on each item are given in the form of a Likert scale, with 4 points indicating very disagreeable, which is given a score of 1, to very agreeable, which is given a score of 4.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted in three high schools in Kota Bandung, by distributing both printed and online questionnaires. Data collection was conducted to obtain sociodemographic data, including gender, age, and grade level, as well as scores from the CASE© Inventory and PCSQ-Adolescent measuring instruments. Data collection was conducted from September to November 2023. The total participants in this study were 308 adolescents (179 females and 129 males, M age = 16.24, SD = 1.076). Based on grade level, 119 were 12th-grade students (38.6%), 117 were 10th-grade students (38%), and 72 were 11th-grade students (23.4%).

Data Analysis

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach to collect and analyze data. Data analysis techniques were used to analyze sociodemographic data and determine the relationship between the variables. The socio-demographic data collected in this study are presented in terms of number and percentage. M and SD were used to present the descriptive statistics of parenting style and cognitive autonomy. To compare the scores between genders, we used the independent t-test. Multiple regression analysis techniques were performed to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables and to predict the value of the dependent variable (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Demographic data

The study included a total of 308 adolescents (179 females and 129 males), ranging from 14-20 years old (M = 16.24, SD = 1.076). According to grade level, 119 were 12th-grade students (38.6%), 117 were 10th-grade students (38%), and 72 were 11th-grade students (23.4%).

Descriptive statistics and differences between genders

Table 1 shows the results of descriptive analysis of parenting styles and cognitive autonomy scores in males and females. The t-test analysis shows that there are no significant differences in

cognitive autonomy and supportive parenting styles between males and females. The significant differences were only found in unsupportive parenting, where females scored higher.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and differences in cognitive autonomy and parenting style based on gender

Variable	Participant	Mean	SD	*p*
Cognitive Autonomy	Male	85.04	7.86	0.90
	Female	85.17	8.62	
Supportive Parenting	Male	34.52	4.06	0.22
	Female	33.84	5.24	
Unsupportive Parenting	Male	26.32	5.27	0.01
	Female	28.49	6.02	

Relationship between parenting styles and cognitive autonomy

Table 2 shows the regression analysis between supportive and unsupportive parenting as independent variables, and cognitive autonomy as the dependent variable. The results obtained are supportive parenting and unsupportive parenting simultaneously predict cognitive autonomy by 12.22%, R2 = 0.122, F (3,03) = 22.532, p = <0.001.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

R	R^2	F	Sig.
0.359	0.129	22.532	<0.001

Table 3 shows the results of the relationship between each parenting style and cognitive autonomy. The results show that only supportive parenting significantly correlates with cognitive autonomy, p<0.001.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results of the Role of Each Parenting Style on Cognitive Autonomy

	Cognitive Autonomy	
	t	***p***
Supportive Parenting	4.720	<0.001
Unsupportive Parenting	-1.569	0.118

Discussions

The current study aims to determine the relationship between parenting styles and cognitive autonomy in Indonesian adolescents. The results indicated that supportive parenting styles, which include warmth, structure, and autonomy support, significantly correlate with adolescents' ability to think independently. Meanwhile, parenting styles that inhibit their children's development, including rejection, chaos, and coercion, did not correlate with adolescents' ability to think independently.

These results show that Indonesian adolescents who reported that their parents provide them with warmth and affection, encourage them to be autonomous, and provide clear direction for their behavior tend to be more able to think independently. These results are in line with the results of other studies which state that warm relationships between parents and adolescents, parental monitoring, family support, and autonomy support, which includes support for children to participate in family decision-making, encourage their cognitive autonomy (Abdullah et al., 2020;

Hill & Wang, 2015; Michael & Attias, 2016). While the majority of the previous studies were conducted in the West and the majority of the adopted culture is individualistic, this study was conducted in Indonesia with a collectivist cultural background. Our findings suggest that despite the differences in cultural backgrounds, the results are similar, specifically that supportive parenting behaviors may support the development of cognitive autonomy as a critical aspect of adolescent development.

In addition, a comparison between genders shows that there were no significant differences in the ability of male and female adolescents to think independently. This finding is contrary to Lee et al. (2010) study on Taiwanese adolescents, which found that males show higher cognitive autonomy than females. Lee et al. posit that in collectivist cultures, gender-specific expectations regarding the freedom of expression may impact the development of cognitive autonomy, with males being granted more latitude than females. The possible explanations for our findings are related to the finding that females perceived their parents as more unsupportive compared to their male counterparts. For female adolescents, parents' behavior that provides boundaries for them can be considered as a form of attention and affection (Agustiani & Rubiyanti 2021). This may allow female adolescents to have the same cognitive autonomy as male adolescents because there are clear boundaries for developmentally relevant information.

CONCLUSIONS

Parenting behaviors characterized by warmth, clear direction and boundaries for adolescents, and support for adolescents to be autonomous may promote the development of the ability to think independently in adolescents. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study conducted to determine the relationship between parenting and cognitive autonomy in adolescents in Indonesia. In addition, this study can also provide information on forms of parenting that can support and hinder cognitive autonomy in adolescents and can be used as a basis for developing intervention programs for parents, especially for parents with Gen Z children.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations, including the sample in this study is not sufficiently strong to represent the wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in Indonesia and participants may have given answers that are considered more appropriate to society or socially acceptable, which may affect the accuracy of the data on parenting styles and cognitive autonomy.

Future research studies might explore other contributing factors in cognitive autonomy development, to get a more comprehensive idea of other influencing factors in addition to parenting, specifically in Indonesian adolescent populations.

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