

## The permissive non-parental childcare and moral intelligence: Indonesian setting

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### ABSTRACT

Most parents in Indonesia are unable to provide maximum care for their children while working. Childcare includes fostering moral intelligence, which is carried out by grandmothers, household assistants, and daycare assistants. Furthermore, 178 young children (95 males and 83 females) and 178 caregivers (68 grandmothers, 54 household assistants, and 56 daycare assistants) were involved in the study. Simple regression analysis was used to examine parenthood on moral intelligence, and moderator analysis was used to test permissive non-parental childcare and moral intelligence in early childhood. The results showed that authoritative and permissive parenthood has an effect on moral intelligence and that the effects of permissiveness on moral intelligence are only moderately influenced. Permissive non-parental childcare and moral intelligence apply to the group of grandmothers and household assistants. The research provides a detailed description of the role of predictors on moral intelligence in non-parental care.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Moral intelligence is important for human development and in people's lives [1]. At present, it is a very interesting topic because it affects various aspects of human life [2], and it is one of the most important intelligence that should be considered. Research conducted by Janssens and Maja [3] shows that the association between parenting styles and moral behavior of children is constant from childhood to adulthood. Other research examining the moral intelligence of high school students in Nigeria shows that moral intelligence is related to academic integrity [4].

Moral intelligence is the center of human intelligence because it has a great influence on other fields and serves as a common thread for future action [5], [6]. Furthermore, it is an act that represents universal principles and the truths of human behavior [7]. The development of moral intelligence is not only limited to reasoning (moral knowing) but also has to consider other aspects, such as feelings and action [8]-[10]. Moral intelligence refers to the knowledge of the universal goodness and values in the society, while moral feelings relate to loving attitudes and adhering to the values of kindness, which create an awareness for moral behavior [11].

Several studies have discussed the impact of parenthood on children's moral intelligence. In the first five years, children need love, especially from both parents. However, compassion is the first thing children learn and teach to show empathy for others. Along with these patterns, moral intelligence becomes very important and a source of compassion. Moral intelligence provide purpose for humans, and people behave in the right way when they have high moral intelligence [12].

Parents play an important role in raising children, especially in fostering moral intelligence. Children's early experiences involving brain development through their interactions with parents and caregivers have a direct influence on moral intelligence [13]. Therefore, parents and caregivers need to provide moral assistance from time to time, considering that it cannot be formed in a very short time.

Research by Campaert, Annalaura, and Ersilia [14] shows that poor parenting has an impact on children's moral detachment, which is usually characterized by aggressive behavior. In addition, the results of research conducted by Augustine and Stifter [15] shows that positive and warm parenting is effective for development of children's conscience and compliance. Gentle parents have the advantage of constantly developing the moral behavior of their children. Meanwhile, research conducted by Karmakar [16] shows that parenting styles that enforce prohibitions and restrictions make children aware of the rules and norms that apply in the family and society. However, this parenting style does not apply to adolescents because parents that apply too many youth restrictions may influence teenagers' behavior in order to adhere to values and rules, as negative consequences are avoided. Research conducted by Alhadabi, *et al.* [17], shows that a father's upbringing is directly related to moral intelligence, but a mother's upbringing is not directly related to moral intelligence.

Unfortunately, not all children receive more attention from both parents because of responsibility. This is also shown in the work participation rate of women over 15 years of age in Indonesia, which shows an increase from the previous year to 53.08% [18]. Parents that can not look after or care for their children while working will transfer the responsibility to others (non-parental childcare). Parents in Indonesia that are busy working usually transfer their childcare to other people, such as close relatives (grandparents, uncles, and aunts), household assistants, or daycare [19], [20].

Several previous studies also investigated non-parental care, similar to the research by Ma, Chen, and Li [21] non-parental home care is an important type of childcare that is widely used in the developed societies, which has a substantial effect on the children's development. However, this study focus more on the involvement of foreign domestic servants in non-parental care in Hong Kong. Another study by Zhang, *et al.* [22] focused on parents in urban Chinese with a 14-month-old child that discussed about caregivers and ideals in caring for the children. The results showed that parents in urban Tionghoa employ caregivers to complement the childcare provided by both grandparents and mothers (multicaregivers) to improve the quality of childcare. De Moura, *et al.* [23] analyzed potential differences between caregivers, such as mothers, grandmothers, household assistants, and daycare assistants. The results showed that there were significant differences between caregivers, which includes basic care, body stimulation, and personal attention. However, previous research focused more on the differences in non-parental upbringing, than on their impact on some aspects of development, such as aspects of moral development.

Research on non-parental care has not been widely carried out, but the facts regarding the condition of children involved in non-parental care have become a phenomenon. In light of this phenomenon, this study aims to explore non-parental care for the development of moral intelligence, considering that many parents have the potential to entrust childcare to non-parental care. Research on the role of non-parental caregivers in the development of moral intelligence is very important because parents are the strongest moral agents [24], [25]. Previous studies partially address non-parental care and no one has extensively discussed the effects of non-parental care on moral intelligence. Therefore, the research on the effect of non-parental care simultaneously on early childhood moral intelligence is important. This study will contribute to the development of early childhood moral intelligence when non-parental care is involved in childcare routines.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1. Participants

This study included 178 young children (95 males and 83 females) aged 5-6 years in Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. (Mage=5.60, SD=0.491) and their caregivers (68 grandmothers, 54 household assistants, and 56 daycare assistants). Children participated voluntarily having the parents' permission and were from 11 kindergartens. The caregivers include grandmothers, household assistants, and daycare assistants that were female.

## 2.2. Measurements

### 2.2.1. Parenting

Measurement of parenting patterns applied by child caregivers using the Parenting Scale and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) [26]. The PSDQ scale consists of 62 items with five points (1=never to 5=always). PSDQ scale translation uses the back-translation procedure, and the Cronbach's alpha in this study was .75.

### 2.2.2. Moral intelligence

The scale used for measuring children's moral intelligence was developed based on the theory of Borba's [8], which consists of seven moral virtues. Borba's [8] moral virtues are empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and justice. This scale consists of 14 illustrations with three score categories, namely (low to high). Each illustration contains three question items (think, feel, do), and the Cronbach's alpha in this study was .75.

## 2.3. Procedures

The research activity started with obtaining parental consent as children and caregivers are to participate. After obtaining the consent, the reporters then conducted a storytelling test to measure the children's moral intelligence using a scale. Furthermore, the storytelling test technique is carried out by face-to-face interviews and orally, considering that early children cannot read fluently. The storytelling test is carried out flexibly according to the school schedule, readiness, and condition of the child. In general, the duration of the test is  $\pm 10-30$  minutes, but some children need more than 30 minutes. The reporter conducted a storytelling test with a 3-person research team. After collating the children's answers, the children were graded according to their answers, and the caregivers were asked to fill in the parenting scale.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Descriptive data

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of children's moral intelligence and parenting patterns based on the care group and presents the results of the ANOVA calculation. Furthermore, it also showed that the children's moral intelligence and parenting style in the group of grandmothers, household assistants, and daycare caregivers are in the medium category. The ANOVA calculation results showed that there are significant differences in authoritative childcare in the group of grandmothers and daycare assistants.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA

	Grandmothers (n=68)		Household assistants (n=54)		Daycare assistants (n=56)		Total		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
MI	29.485	6.99	29.740	6.37	31.01	6.57	30.04	6.67	.889*
AV	114.74	9.412	110.69	12.428	108.75	13.039	111.62	11.799	4.356**
AN	85.74	6.836	85.98	6.503	84.57	5.969	85.44	6.464	.764*
PV	60.40	4.601	60.67	4.682	59.52	4.969	60.20	4.741	.899*

### 3.2. Childcare predictions of moral intelligence

The prediction of childcare towards moral intelligence was tested using SPSS 20.0 software with simple regression analysis techniques. All types of childcare predicted moral intelligence ( $R=.304$ ,  $R^2=.092$ ,  $F=5.908$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Specifically, the type of authoritative childcare has a significant effect on moral intelligence of young children ( $\beta=.258$ ,  $t=3.407$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Permissive childcare types also have a significant effect on moral intelligence ( $\beta=.162$ ,  $t=2.000$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Meanwhile, the type of authoritarian childcare has no effect on moral intelligence ( $\beta=-.079$ ,  $t=-0.945$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Predictions of childcare towards moral intelligence are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Childcare model prediction on moral intelligence

The direction of the relationship	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	t
Model	.304	.092	5.908***		
AV $\rightarrow$ MI				.258	3.407***
AN $\rightarrow$ MI				-.079	-0.945*
PV $\rightarrow$ MI				.162	2.000**

### 3.3. Moderator effects of non-parental childcare on childcare patterns and moral intelligence

The regression test results show that authoritative and permissive childcare have a significant effect on the moral intelligence of young children. Furthermore, a moderation analysis was carried out to determine the role of the moderator variable in the relationship between authoritative and permissive childcare in moral intelligence. The moderating variables were the grandmother's childcare group, household assistants' childcare, and daycare assistants' childcare. The analysis was tested using PROCESS Macro on SPSS 20.0 software. A summary of the results of the moderation analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Bootstrapped conditional effects of childcare on moral intelligence in terms of care between 'grandmothers' childcare, household assistants' childcare, and daycare assistants' childcare

Effect of moderating variables	Estimate	SE	Observed moderated effects		p
			Lower	Upper	
AV → MI	.00	.05	-.09	.10	.88
PV → MI	-.31	.12	-.55	-.06	.01
The effect of permissive parenting on moral intelligence on care between grandmothers, household assistants, and daycare assistants					
Grandmothers	.57	.16	.25	.88	.00
Household assistants	.26	.10	.05	.46	.01
Daycare assistants	.05	.16	-.37	.26	.74

The results of the moderation analysis show that there is a moderating effect on the relationship between permissive childcare and moral intelligence ( $\beta = -.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). There is no moderating effect in the relationship between authoritative childcare and moral intelligence ( $\beta = .00$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

The results of the analysis of interaction effect in Table 3 showed that the influence of permissive childcare on moral intelligence is reported in the grandmothers' childcare group and the household assistants' childcare group. Meanwhile, in the daycare assistants' childcare group, there was no influence of permissive childcare on moral intelligence. The moderator effect of non-parental childcare upbringing on permissive childcare and moral intelligence can be seen in Figure 1 of the interaction patterns (scatterplot).

Figure 1 shows that in the grandmother's childcare, there was an interaction between permissive childcare towards early childhood moral intelligence. Likewise, in the household assistants' childcare, there was also a permissive childcare interaction with early childhood moral intelligence. This shows that the higher the permissive childcare applied by grandmothers' childcare and household assistants' childcare, the higher the moral intelligence of the young children. However, in the daycare assistants' childcare, there was no interaction between permissive childcare and moral intelligence.

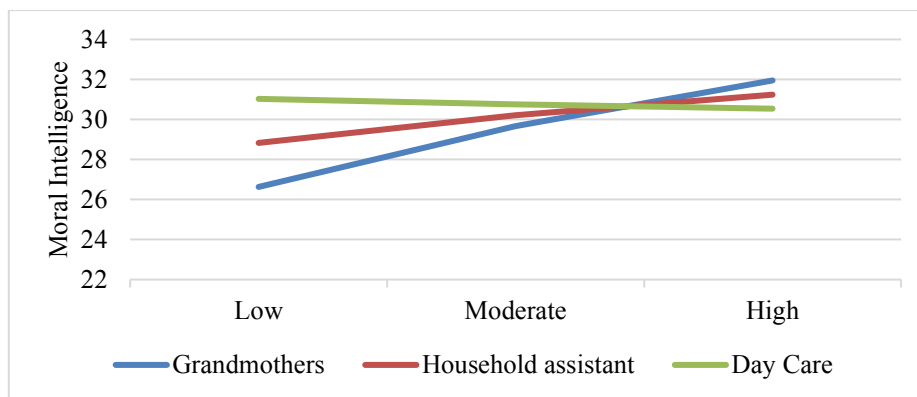


Figure 1. Interaction pattern graph

## 4. DISCUSSION

This study examined non-parental childcare on the development of moral intelligence in early childhood, considering that currently many children are under non-parental childcare. The effects of parenting on moral intelligence have been analyzed by previous studies [14]-[16]. However, the study was conducted on parents and only measured one particular type of childcare. Meanwhile, this study analyzes the effect of non-

parental childcare on the moral intelligence of early childhood. This study explores three types of childcare (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive childcare) [27] implemented by the non-parental childcare to the development of moral intelligence. The results indicate that authoritative and permissive childcare practices by non-parental childcare have a significant effect on the moral intelligence of early childhood. Furthermore, it also indicates that authoritative childcare has a stronger effect on moral intelligence in early childhood when compared to permissive childcare.

Previous research showed that permissive childcare does not affect children's moral development [28]. It also showed that permissive childcare has a negative impact on children's behavior. According to the research by Masud, *et al.* [29], permissive childcare produces aggressive and negative behavior in children. Hosokawa and Katsura [30] research shows that permissive childcare influences behavior problems in boys. Meanwhile, research by Tan and Yasin [31], Shahsavari [32] shows that permissive childcare are not effective in encouraging children's morals.

Interestingly, this study contributed to clarifying that permissive childcare does not always have a negative impact on the development of moral intelligence. Permissive childcare also has a positive effect on the culture in which the childcare is applied, for a collectivistic culture such as in Indonesia, the effect of permissive childcare can be positive. Other research has shown that the negative influence of permissive childcare on moral has a point, but not always because it depends on the cultural context of the local community [33]. The effect of permissive childcare on children's moral intelligence in this study was greater in the grandmothers' childcare than in the household assistants' childcare.

The results showed that permissive childcare has an advantage in the development of children's moral intelligence in grandmothers' childcare and household assistants' childcare. As it is known, the care of grandmothers and household assistants tends to be personal. Furthermore, personal childcare encourages children to explore moral knowledge in which children can develop reflections on the use of moral values. The conditions that arise in permissive childcare are that adults communicate the consequences of behavior and discusses the rules to the children, and not just providing moral rules [34], [35]. Stating that in permissive childcare, adults consider children as partners so that fewer restrictions are imposed. Meanwhile, in mass parenting conditions, the results showed that children can learn moral through enforcing rules. Compliance with the rules for mass childcare in accordance with Kohlberg's theory of moral development [36], [37] at the pre-conventional stage, according to which the children's moral intelligence is related to social norms that result from the children's relationships with their environment. This moral enforcement only occurs when children are with other people [38].

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results showed that parenting childcare affects moral intelligence. Authoritative childcare has a more significant impact on moral intelligence when compared to permissive childcare. Furthermore, it reported that grandmothers' childcare and household assistants' childcare is more likely to lead to permissive childcare, which is more flexible and enforces the freedom to apply rules to children because they only care for a few children. Meanwhile, daycare assistants' childcare needs to use firmness in applying rules to children because they care for more children.

This study has several limitations. First, related to the sample, which includes young children aged 5-6, and a total of 178 children from 11 schools in different districts. Therefore, a larger sample covering all regions is needed in order to provide more representative results. This study only examined the effect of non-parental childcare upbringing on the development of early childhood moral intelligence, further studies can focus on the effect of non-parental childcare upbringing on the development of another intelligence.

The practical implication of this study relates to the development of moral intelligence in early childhood by non-parental childcare. In this regard, the care of grandmothers' childcare and household assistants' childcare needs to improve permissive childcare because they are more flexible and provide freedom in applying rules and considering children's opinions in developing moral intelligence. Meanwhile, daycare assistants' childcare needs to be firm in applying the rules because they care for more children. This study suggests that further research should examine the effects of non-parental childcare on other intelligence and examine aspects of moral intelligence more closely using a larger sample.

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