

HOLISTIC PARENTING TO ENHANCE CHILDREN'S WELL BEING

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Abstract

Children's well-being is an important aspect which is influenced by by the practice of parenting. In Islamic literature, there is a concept of parenting which consists of five dimenisons: qudwah hasanah (integrated role model), al adah (habituation), al mauidzah (effective advice), al mulahadzah (fairness in care and control), and al uqubah wa ujaroh (proportional consequences). I call this concept holistic parenting. Objective. This study aims to examine the application of holistic parenting approach toward children's well-being. One hundred and nine 6th grade students were sampled in this study, using incidental sampling technique. Holistic parenting scale and Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) were used as measuring tools. Results. Significant positive correlation between holistic parenting and children's well-being were found; either for myself dimension ($r = 0,70, p = 0,000$) or my friend dimension ($r = 0,861, p = 0,000$). Regression analysis revealed that the role of holistic parenting against well-being variability accounted for 48.5% and 73,8%. Conclusion. I conclude that holistic parenting has a role in enhancing children's wellbeing.

Keywords: *holistic parenting, children's well-being*

INTRODUCTION

Family is the first environment for children, in which relationships between members are formed. Parents are role models that influence the development, attitudes and values that the child will hold. Good parenting will build the child's psychological well-being (Conley, Caldwell, Flynn, Dupre & Rudolph, 2004, in Krause & Dailey, 2009). Mental health and psychological well-being are important aspects in developing children's abilities. This condition can be achieved if the child is raised in an atmosphere of positive parenting (Asizah, 2015). Harmoniuos relationship between parents, that is full of warmth and emotional attachment, will support children to develop their well-being (Dewi & Utami, 2008). A child can have a healthy self-concept and a sense of competence if he/she trusts the environment (Heinrich, 2014), and is able to have a clear purpose in life that will influence his/her well-being (Martinen & Salmela, 2012).

To date, studies on parenting generally refer to a parenting style introduced by Diana Baumrind (1967) and later developed by Maccoby and Martin (1983), as quoted in Santrock (2011). This parenting style consists of four types, which is based on two axes: high or low

control/demandingness; and high or low warmth/responsiveness. Based on the combination of those two axes, there are four different parenting styles, as can be seen in the following table:

	Control/Demanding	Uncontrol/Undemanding
Warmth/Responsive	AUTHORITATIVE PARENT	PERMISSIVE PARENT
Aloof/Unresponsive	AUTHORITARIAN PARENT	UNINVOLVED PARENT

Table 1. Classification of parenting styles (Maccoby and Martin, 1983, in Santrock, 2011)

Generally, basic principles of parenting follow the universal rules in society in all parts of the world. However, with increasing interest in exploring local wisdom and studies in the field of indigenous psychology (Sarwono, 2012), research that takes into account tradition, culture, habits, values and customs of local people has been getting more attention. In Indonesia, where the society is known as religious and has traditions, cultures and customs that are maintained for years, parenting practices cannot be separated from religious perspective. This perspective influences parents' attitude toward parenting (Rahmawati, 2015). Concerning this, Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia has its own principles in parenting. These principles are derived from the sources of Islamic teachings, The Quran and Hadith.

This study aims to examine the practice of parenting based on religious beliefs, which is based on Islamic literature and the opinions of Muslim scholars (*ulema*). Various scholars have presented writings on Islamic parenting, which is known as *tarbiyatul aulad*. From a variety of existing *tarbiyatul aulad* concepts, the one from Abdullah Nashih Ulwan (2014) is considered as a comprehensive concept by the majority of educators. There are five parenting methods that are approved by scholars as the best methods in education. This Islamic parenting concept is called as **holistic parenting**, and it consists of five dimensions: *al qudwah* (integrated role model), *al 'adah* (habituation), *al mau'idzah* (effective advice), *al mulahadzah* (fairness in care and control), and *al 'uqubah wa ujaroh* (consequences). This concept integrates psychological atmosphere and practical parenting techniques.



Figure 1. Holistic parenting techniques (Rahmawati, 2015).

In this study, I analyze the influence of holistic parenting on the development of children's well-being. Well-being is a person's evaluation of his/her life. Such evaluation can be in the cognitive form like life satisfaction, or emotional response to an event, such as positive feelings (Diener, 1984; Diener & Oishi, 2000). Concepts concerning well-being are quite varied. This study will discuss the most

popular concept, which is subjective well-being (SWB). Studies in the field of SWB have shown that life goal or self orientation related to family connectedness and social context has a strong correlation with SWB (Diener & Chan, 2011). Children's well-being will be seen from two most prominent dimensions, that is from the child itself ('myself' dimension), and in connection between the child and the peers ('my friend' dimension). My hypothesis is that there is a positive significant correlation between holistic parenting on children's well being. I assume that holistic parenting and each of its technique will enhance children's well being.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the research was students of Islamic primary schools in Depok area, West Java, Indonesia. This population was chosen because it was assumed that students who go to an Islamic school are one hundred percent Muslims, and are brought up by their parents with parenting style based on Islamic teachings. I limited the participants by drawing a sample that fit the characteristics of the population. Sample was drawn using accidental random sampling technique which aimed to get a sample representative of the population. One hundred and nine 6th grade students in SD Islam (Islamic primary school) X in Cimanggis, Depok, participated in the study. Data collection was conducted in October 2015, for about one week.

Primary data collected consisted of age and sex of the respondents, holistic parenting practiced by parents, in the dimensions of *al qudwah* (integrated role model), *al 'adah* (habituation), *al mau'idzah* (effective advice), *al mulahadzah* (fairness in care and control), and *al 'uqubah wa ujaroh* (consequences); and children's well-being in the dimensions of myself and my friend. I tested the holistic parenting measuring tool to obtain reliable items. Based on this test, it was revealed that Cronbach's alpha reliability of holistic parenting scale was $\alpha = 0.931$. This means that 93.1% was true-score variance and 6.7% was error variance from content sampling error and content heterogeneity error. Holistic parenting scale consisted of 30 statements with five-point answer choices, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example statement for integrated role model dimension: "my parents are my role models in respecting other people", for habituation: "my parents have set a regular schedule in guiding me", for effective advice: "advice from my parents is suitable for the problems that I'm facing"; for fairness in care and control: "my parents monitor my achievements in school"; and for proportional consequences: "big or small, my parents appreciate my achievements". Scores obtained from this questionnaire were then added to get a total.

The next variable is children's well-being, Children's well-being in this study is focused on the specific domain of childhood, that is, well-being in self (myself dimension) and well-being in interactions with their peer (my friend dimension). The measuring tool for children's well-being was adapted from *The Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale* or MSLSS (Compass, 1993; Sarason, 1997, in Huebert, 2001) which was developed specifically to measure well-being in children and teenagers. MSLSS has been widely used in measuring children's well-being in several countries. A reliability test was then conducted toward valid statements, using internal consistency alpha Cronbach processed with SPSS version 20, and obtained the result of $\alpha = 0.572$ for myself dimension and $\alpha = 0.647$ for my friend dimension. Example statement for myself MSLSS was: "I am a good kid", "There are many good things that I can do"; while for my friend scale: "My friend means something for me", "I am happy with my friends". The measuring tool was designed using ordinal scale with answer choices ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data testing in this study used correlation and regression analysis technique and processed statistically using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

Holistic parenting's contribution to well-being (MSLSS). The main objective of data analysis in this research was to test the connection between holistic parenting and well-being. Results from the test are shown in the following tables:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: Holistic parenting and well being (MSLSS)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<i>Holistic parenting</i>	104,4037	11,66835	109
<i>MSLSS – myself</i>	22,6697	2,62486	109
<i>MSLSS – my friend</i>	28,1744	3,68390	109

Based on Table 2 above, it is revealed that the mean for holistic parenting is 104.4037, with standard deviation at 11.66835; the mean for MSLSS-myself is 22.6697 and standard deviation is 2.62486; and mean for MSLSS-my friend is 28.1744 with standard deviation 3.68390.

Table 3. Correlations: Holistic parenting and well-being (MSLSS)

	<i>Holistic parenting</i>	<i>MSLSS – myself</i>	<i>MSLSS – my friend</i>
<i>Holistic parenting</i>	1		
<i>MSLSS – myself</i>	0,700**	1	
<i>MSLSS – my friend</i>	0,861**	0,239*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,700 ^a	0,490	0,485	1,88390
	0,861 ^a	0,741	0,738	1,88390

a. Predictors: (Constant), *Holistic parenting*
 b. Dependent Variable: *Myself*
 c. Dependent Variable: *My friend*

In Table 3, it is shown that there were significant positive correlation on level 0.01 between holistic parenting to children's well-being (myself dimension); as well as my friend dimension. The correlation stands at $r = 0.700$ and $r = 0.861$, respectively. This means, the higher children's perception about holistic parenting, then the higher their well-being in myself dimension; as well as in peer aspect. This finding supported the hypothesis, which stated that holistic parenting has a significant positive relation with well-being. Furthermore, based on regression analysis, in Table 4 it is shown that holistic parenting contributed 48.5 percent to children's well-being (myself dimension), and 73.8 percent to well-being in my friend dimension. This means that 48.5 percent of children's well-being in myself dimension was contributed by holistic parenting, while the remaining 51.5 percent was influenced by other variables not addressed in this study. Moreover, 73.8 percent of well-being in my friend dimension was contributed by holistic parenting, while the remaining 26.2 was contributed by other variables not addressed in this study.

DISCUSSION

Parenting practices received by children will shape their well-being from an early age. This is because family environment has an influence in achieving optimal development of children's mental health (Hoghughi, 2004), including well-being (Krause and Dailey, 2009). Holistic parenting, which has five applicable dimensions, has a significant role in the development of children's well-being. The results of this study supported the hypothesis, which means that techniques in holistic parenting; all of it has a role in shaping children's well-being. Well-being in this study is seen from children's evaluations of feelings of wellness and happiness in themselves; as well as in relations with their peer.

The findings of this study is in line with the research about children's well-being conducted by Jekeilek (1998). Jekeilek has stated that children living in a family with strong conflicts will grow to be children with negative well-being. On the contrary, children from divorced parents are found to have more health problems and more frequent visits to health services, compared to children with intact families (Cafferata & Kasper; Jennings & Sheldon; Moreno; Worobey & Angel, in Stevenson & Black, 1995, as quoted by Dewi and Utami, 2008).

Some studies in Indonesia which highlighted the importance of family roles and developing children's well-being also found similiar results. Dewi and Utami's (2008) study in city X, Central Java, found that children from divorced parents will have a negative well-being if the parents didn't give explanations of the divorce to the children; relationship between the parents worsened after divorce; the children compared themselves to other families with harmonious parents, and children would have poorer problem-solving strategy.

Discussions between experts about parenting styles that were initially developed by Baumrind and Maccoby and Martin as mentioned above, and about the need to complement parenting techniques with practical guidance, are still developing today. However, I feel that discussions about parenting styles are not limited to the need to complement the theories with practical guidance, but should also explore parenting styles practiced in certain society that are influenced by culture, tradition, and religious values held by the people. With increasing interest to explore indigenous psychology which considers local wisdom, then holistic parenting can be an answer in parenting practice based on religion in Indonesia

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Holistic parenting is derived from Islamic literature which is laden with solutions to various psychological problems, including in providing an environment that supports children's well-being. Through this study, parents are encouraged to apply holistic parenting techniques in a consistent manner, with religious foundation, so that it can develop children's well-being. This technique is in line with the religious beliefs held by the majority of people in Indonesia, so that parents do not face dilemma when met by tough choices in parenting process. Apart from practical suggestions for parents as mentioned above, another suggestion for researchers in parenting is to explore more of the literature *tarbiyatul aulad* based on Islamic concepts, as a comprehensive solution that can be offered to the scientific world.

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