

## Exploring Early Childhood Independence in Relation to Mother's Employment Status

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Mayasari<sup>1</sup>, Yusnadi<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Takwin Machmud<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Mayasari

E-mail:

[Nasutionmaya043@gmail.com](mailto:Nasutionmaya043@gmail.com)

Post Address: Faculty of  
Education, Universitas Negeri  
Medan, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine differences in early childhood independence based on the mother's employment status in Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah (MDA) Kampung Durian, Medan Perjuangan District. The method used in this study is a qualitative method using descriptive qualitative data analysis, namely data collected in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. The data used in this research is primary data. Namely data obtained directly from the field. In this study, primary data was obtained by observation and interviews. The results of this study shows that the student who has employer mothers have a high level of independence compared to student whose mothers do not work and the status of mothers who work or not can also be a factor of a child's independence.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Independence in the context of early childhood is referring to the child's ability to perform daily activities or tasks alone or with little guidance, in accordance with the stages of development and the child's capacity. Therefore, Parker (2005) asserts that student's independence is related to the level of physical competence that student have, so that independence in accordance with the development and capacity of student will be achieved as intended. Independence in childhood is more motoric in nature, such as trying to eat alone, cleaning up toys after playing, wearing their own socks and shoes, bathing and dressing themselves. The earlier the age of the child to practice independence in performing their developmental tasks, it is expected that independent values and skills will be easier to master and can be firmly embedded in the child. Independence begins to be seen in student aged 18 months to 3 years. At this time, a child begins to develop self-control over external arrangements or restrictions (for example, parents and social environment). He starts doing what he wants and saying no to what he does not want. When entering preschool age (3-6 years old), student should have developed the ability of independence because student have begun to take the initiative to do various things on their own without the help of others.

The effort to become an independent person requires a process or effort that starts from doing simple tasks until finally mastering more complex and challenging skills, which require a higher level of motor and mental mastery. The process of helping student become independent individuals requires a wise attitude of parents and the environment so that student can continue to be motivated in increasing their independence. The formation of independence in student is strongly influenced by the role of parents. To become independent a person needs the opportunity, support and encouragement from the family and the environment around him, to achieve autonomy over oneself. Student's independence is also greatly influenced by the treatment of parents or siblings in the family (Amini, 2017; Mohzana & Murcahyanto, 2023; Yanuarsari et al, 2021). Student who are always closely monitored, prevented a lot or always prohibited in every activity can result in the fracture of one's independence. A wise attitude and reasonable treatment of student can trigger the growth of student's independence. Parents who are overprotective of their student, overly supervising their student, preventing their student, for fear of getting dirty, fear of damage, or fear of accidents, can ultimately be fatal. Intended to protect or guard student become timid, lack confidence, and are completely dependent on others.

According to Wiyani (2012), student's independence is influenced by two factors that is internal and external factors. Internal factors is including physiological conditions and psychological conditions, while external factors include the environment, parents' love and affection for their student, parenting patterns in the family, and experience factors in life. Independence behaviour that can arise from external factors is the influence of environmental elements, one of which is the working status of the mother. The status of mothers can be divided into two types that is working mothers and non-working mothers (housewives). According to National Regulation Number XIII Years 2003 concerning employment Chapter X Article 77 states the length of working time for labourer or employees seven hours per day for six working days in one week; or eight hours per day for five working days in one week. Non-working mothers or often also called housewives according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (Alwi, 2005) can be defined as a wife (mother) who only takes care of various household chores (unemployment in an office). The role of mothers includes things such as caring for and looking after student, providing affection and protection, providing stimulation and education (Akbar & Hawadi, 2001).

Based on initial observations that researchers have made in the field, mothers who are more at home will have an impact on providing excessive assistance and protection so that student tend to be more dependent. This is in line with the opinion (Suardani, et al, 2016) that the negative impact of non-working mothers is the possibility that student will become more spoiled because the mother has more time with the child, so the child tends to be served by the mother. In contrast to student with working mother, working mothers actually encourage their student to do self-sufficiency and train student to be responsible for their own tasks.

As previously mention, it can be concluded that student who are cared for by working mothers have the opportunity to develop their independence. With this, researchers are interested in knowing about the independence of early childhood at MDA (*Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*) Kampung Durian, Medan Perjuangan Subdistrict in terms of the mother's employment status.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This research observation was conducted at MDA (*Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*) Kampung Durian, Medan Perjuangan sub-district. The subjects used by the author in this research are several MDA teachers who teach at MDA Kampung Durian. The data used in this research is primary data. Namely data obtained directly from the field. This study primary data obtained through the observation and interviews. The observation technique is carried out by directly observing the existing problems to study the subject of study by examining the behavior and interaction of the subject of study spontaneously and naturally and then recording. The interview method is dialogue conducted by the researcher and the research subject which is two-way, while the questions have been systematically develop based on the research theme. The questions can flexibly change according to the direction of the conversation to avoid awkwardness towards subject. The instrument of interview was developed based on the indicator of independence including confidences, Discipline, Motivation, Initiative, and Responsibility. Each of the independence indicators were developed into interview question (Sugiyono, 2011).

The data analysis technique used in this research is a qualitative data analysis technique, using descriptive qualitative data analysis, namely data collected in the form of words, images and not numbers. All data collected is likely to be the key to what has been researched. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by others.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Result**

The research data that will be described in this study include student's independence. Indicators of student's independence in this study include self-confidence, discipline, motivation, initiative, and responsibility. To find out the differences in student's independence based on their mother's work, the researchers conducted interviews with several teachers to get the information from these student. According to the results of interviews with several teachers regarding the five indicators mentioned previously, there are differences of opinion

between several teachers. There are some teachers who say that student of working mothers have a higher level of independence rather than student of mothers who do not work.

The following are the results of interviews with teachers mentioned that student of working mothers have a higher level of independence. The result are grouped based on the independence indicators, including: (1) *Self-confidence*. Student were identified happily exchange opinions with other friends about lessons and some student are also always ready to express their argument without being appointed by the teacher. As one of the informants said, "If I pay attention in class, student with working mother are more likely to come forward to do the task rather than student with unemployment mother. It may be due to lack of confidence or fear of making a mistake"; (2) *Discipline*. Student showing a discipline and following the teacher instruction such bring the text book during the class. Moreover, student with working mother also always pay attention to the teacher's explanation when learning. The informant said that the discipline of student who has working mother is more serious on following the teacher instruction. Even without being reminded, the students always bring textbooks, always pay attention to the teacher explaining, and taking notes on the lessons. In contrast, the student with unemployment mother has less intention towards teacher instruction; (3) *Motivation*. Student with working mother always attempt to achieve high score in exam. As mentioned by the interviewees, the student with working mother have higher scores rather than student with unemployment mother; (4) *Initiatives*. Student with working mothers is more often to ask questions when they don't understand towards the learning materials. Moreover, the student response to questions posed by the teacher without being prompted. In contrast to student whose mothers do not work, they will be more silent and passive. The informant mentioned that the student's with working mother is more active such express their thinking and asking the teacher when they feel confusing about learning materials; (5) *Responsibility*. The high level of responsibility shown by mostly students with working mother. As mentioned by interviewee that the children with working mothers are more actively searching for learning sources or reference in order to solve the problems given by the teacher. Students is always attempted to complete the tasks given by the teacher.

In conclusion, the results of these interviews shows that majority of teachers mentioned that children with working mothers is possessed a high level of independence compared to children with not working mothers. The children with working mother shows high level of each independence indicator. Moreover, it concluded that the working status of a mother is affected towards the learner independencies.

### **3.2. Discussion**

Based on the results of the research, children with working mothers have a high level of independence compared to children with not working mothers. It can also be concluded that the status of a mother who works or not can also be a factor in a child's independence. Similarly, Wiyani's (2012) mentioned that the mother's working status affects the level of children's independence. Consequently, it can be said that the working status of the mother has something to do with the behavior of children's independence. The results of this study shows similarity with the theory by previous experts. Sutadi and Deliana (1994) state that the factors that influence children's independence are the position of children in the family, children who are often left by their parents, the attitude of the mother, father, or family, the

age of the mother, the level of parental education, and the discipline level. Meanwhile, Aziz (2006) explains that there are several obstacles to the nature of independence such excessive assistance, overprotective attitude of parents, excessive protection, and never rejection.

According to Wiyani (2013), the formation of the character of children's independence is inseparable from the role of parents and the care given by parents to their children. If a child is trained to be independent since childhood, he/she will not be afraid when he has to leave his/her parents' care to live independently. The parenting of the father and mother has a real role in shaping the independent character of early childhood. Excessive tolerance and parenting from parents will inhibit the development of children independencies. Mu'tadin (2002) explains that independence, like other psychological conditions, can develop well if given the opportunity to develop through continuous training and carried out early on. The exercise can be in the form of providing unassisted tasks that are tailored to the age and ability of the child. From the results of the descriptive results, it was found that the level of independence of children whose mothers did not work or housewives had a lower score than children with mothers who were working mothers. This is due to the time that housewives have more so that children are more often with their mothers. When the mother is more often at home, the child will get used to asking the mother to serve and obey all the child's orders. The behavior of children who are accustomed to being pampered, for example, everything must be served, whatever they want must be obeyed, the habit of ordering others, and lack of strength in trying to meet their own needs, will cause children to become spoiled and result in children's lack of independence.

The other proves shows by the Central Bureau of Statistics (2016) that the length of time in hours used to work from all jobs, then work can be divided into 2 types, namely: full workers are those who work in normal working hours (for 35 hours a week) and non-full workers are those who work under normal working hours (less than 35 hours a week). The results show that the average independence score of children whose mothers work as employees of state-owned enterprises is higher than that of other professions. Mothers who work as laborers have the lowest average child independence score of the other professions.

Based on the results of this study, it can be stated that the working status of the mother is one of the factors that affect the independence of early childhood in MDA (*Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*) Kampung Durian, so that children who are cared for by working mothers have a higher level of independence compared to children who are cared for by mothers who do not work. If all these factors can be developed properly, it is clear that children's independence will be better.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it shows that there is a significant difference between the independence of children with working mothers and children with not working mother. This is reinforced by the results of interviews with several teachers at the MDA (*Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*) that the level of independence of early childhood cared for by working mothers is higher than early childhood cared for by mothers who do not work. So, it can be concluded that the mother's working status factor is the main factor that determines children's independence at MDA (*Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*) Kampung Durian.

The parents role is massively important in students learning. The working mothers should still provide quality time at least 1 hour a day to pay attention to child development from

various aspects so that the achievement of child development can be maximally fulfilled. For mothers who do not work, they should educate children to get used to doing things by themselves so that children can develop well and become independent children. Try to gradually release the child and entrust it to the teacher while at school so that little by little the child's independent behavior can be formed. Teachers who have students whose mothers work should be able to further hone the child's independence when he is at school and improve the child's attitude of independence, for example by giving rewards if the child shows a positive attitude, such as the child wants to throw garbage in its place. Meanwhile, teachers who have students whose mothers do not work should provide independence training for students at school. For example, encouraging children to express their opinions and giving them the freedom to make choices.

Teachers can also provide training and information for parents, especially mothers who do not work, about the importance of independence for child development and do not forget that teachers should monitor the condition of children every month in terms of independence while at home, whether children have experienced an increase in their independence attitude.

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