Single Parent Parenting in Developing Social Emotional of 4-5 Years Old Children

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Abstrak

Social emotional progress is an important part of improvement that should be focused on in learning among adolescents. The formulation of the problem in this study is How is single parent parenting in developing the social-emotional development of children aged 4-5 years at RA Bustanul 'Ulum Jayasakti Kec. Anak Tuha, Kab. Lampung Tengah? This study aims to explore and analyze single parent parenting patterns and their impact on the social emotional development of children aged 4-5 years at RA Bustanul 'Ulum Jayasakti. Using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with single parents and observations of children's behavior, this study attempts to describe the variations of parenting patterns applied and identify the developmental characteristics of children from this group. The results of the study highlighted the complexity of single-parent parenting that has an impact on the diverse social-emotional characters of children. The findings show that children from single parent families exhibit varied characteristics, such as different levels of independence, adaptability to the social environment, and responses to educational stimuli. Thus, this study not only makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on parenting and child development, but also has a significant practical impact in the context of early childhood education and care from single parent families.

Keywords: Parenting, Single Parent, Social Emotional

INTRODUCTION

Considering Regulation Number 20 of 2003 concerning the General Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 14 states that Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an educational effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six, realized through nurturing and educational activities, to assist in their development, physical growth, and readiness for further training. ECE is the foundation of education that fosters firm moral, physical, knowledge, social, linguistic, expressive, and correspondence development according to the unique and progressive stages that prepare children for entry into primary and further
education. Training focuses on teaching and educational experiences to understand the conditions of teachers and students (Putri, 2017).

The family is the smallest unit in the public eye, consisting of the family head (assuming the role of spouse and father), mother, and various individuals who each reside in one unit under one roof while having similar needs or dependencies (Karim, Raya, & Kholilurrahman, 2023). However, within a family, there are complete families, such as those with two parents and other relatives, and incomplete families, such as those with only one parent, either father or mother (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). A total family is one where children live under one roof with both of their biological parents, while a separated family lacks family ties, causing children to be separated from their guardians, resulting in them living with one of their guardians, typically the natural parent. Adolescents are highly influenced by the guidance provided by their guardians (Vinayastri, 2017).

Primary education, before children receive formal education in school, involves basic education provided by parents to children at home, particularly by the parents. Guardians must be careful in developing their children’s personalities, especially in fostering independence in their children at home. Specifically, mothers are the primary educators responsible for teaching children about lifestyle, habits, social relationships with friends, and instilling character in them. As exemplified by some of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him:

الأم مدرسة إذا أعددتها أعددت شعبا طيب الأعراق

The first school for a child is the mother; if you prepare her well, you have prepared the best generation" (Hidayah, 2022). The first person to understand a child is a mother, so learning begins with a mother who spends more time with the child. When introducing something new, a mother plays a significant role starting from the child’s womb, making her role crucial. The family is the primary environment needed for a child to undergo socialization and self-development (E. P. Ferdian Utama, 2020). The family is an essential and significant unit in the public arena. It is formed between a man and a woman, and this relationship must be maintained well to raise children (Hidayah, 2022).

Parenting patterns applied by single parents in RA Bustanul 'Ulum Jayasakti are still hindered by the lack of support from other single parent guardians who fail to see how to apply good and correct parenting examples to their children. The lack of time for parents to accompany their children is also a challenge faced by parents because they have to try to help their children alone. The parenting style of single parents makes children have different social and developmental progress compared to children raised in intact families (S. Ferdian Utama, 2017).

Looking at the conditions in RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti, the author concludes by researching how each single parent’s parenting style deals with their children. What differences are apparent in children, what characters arise from each child. These differences are seen in characters, traits, behavior, and learning independence. Children with single parents will have various traits or behaviors because they only receive love from one parent. In the group of children aged 4-5 years at RA Bustanul Ulum, there are 5-8 children with single parents, five of whom have single mothers who have been widowed by their husbands or divorced. From these children, various characters have emerged, from quiet children at home but seeking attention from teachers at school, to children who are
shy among their peers and choose to be silent even when the teacher provides stimuli, despite receiving rewards. Some children have aggressive traits, are brave enough to hit others, and want to win alone, as their parents give them whatever they want and do not hesitate to punish them. Therefore, children imitate what their parents do.

With this, the author wants to understand how the social-emotional development of children with single parents unfolds, and observe the diversity of characters among these children. How is the social-emotional development of children with intact parents compared to those with single parents? From the above explanation, it is not impossible for children with intact parents to have better traits and characters than children with single parents, and vice versa, as the development of young children cannot be measured by using values, so their achievements correspond to their inherent character traits. Coordinating, enhancing, directing, securing, restraining, and ensuring that development can be carried out according to the standards recognized by society.

Based on the above description, it is found that at RA Bustanul Ulum, almost 50% of children aged 4-5 years have single parents, as found through interviews conducted by researchers with the school's principal. The researcher found various developmental outcomes in children, whether moral, religious, cognitive, or even socio-emotional, depending on the education provided by their parents, as parents are the first thing a child sees, hears, learns, and imitates.

Due to the numerous differences in character among children raised by single parents, the researcher will conduct a study on how single parents (single parents) develop the social-emotional aspects of 4-5 year-old children who have dual roles as fathers and mothers in educating and raising their children at RA Bustanul 'Ulam Jayasakti Anak Tuha. Therefore, the researcher will conduct a study entitled "Parenting Patterns of Single Parents in Developing the Social-Emotional Aspects of 4-5 Year-Old Children at Rudhatul Athfal (RA) Bustanul 'Ulam Jayasakti Anak Tuha in Central Lampung for the 2023-2024 Academic Year."

METHODS

The research completed by specialists utilized subjective examination techniques. Subjective examination is one of the demand research systems that emphasizes the search for interests, understanding, ideas, attributes, side effects, descriptions, or depictions of events in research that is systematic and comprehensive, not false in its reality and can be represented, focusing on quality by utilizing several techniques. Moreover, it is introduced narratively (Sugiyono, 2019). This research employs enlightening research, intending to utilize information that is then captured in the researcher's composition. The information used in this exploration is information that has been described and researched to facilitate the handling of a problem consisting of essential and optional information. Essential information is information gathered based on the direct relationship between the analyst and the source of information. Essential information can also be interpreted as fundamental information or primary information obtained based on information from field research conducted with parents, school managers, class teachers, and accompanying teachers in the 4-5 year-old Orange group at RA Bustanul Ulum. Meanwhile, additional information is information obtained from several valid references and included in an exposition printed by previous scientists, such as books, diaries, propositions, articles, notes, websites, and so on. Examination of information in qualitative exploration is conducted during the
information collection and after the information collection is completed. According to Miles and Huberman, information examination proposes that the exercise of examining subjective information be done intelligently and consistently until completed. The means in this information examination are as follows: information reduction, information display, and achievement determination (Hardani, 2020).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research was conducted at RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti. RA Bustanul Ulum was established in 1972, and for approximately 10 years since its establishment, it faced many obstacles from both educators and students. Thanks to the perseverance and spirit of the entire educational board, alhamdulillah, it finally began to progress, although obstacles still persisted. The total number of students at RA Bustanul Ulum is 96, with 5 classes in total, comprising two classes labeled as Class A and three classes labeled as Class B. The curriculum at RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti adopts the K-13 Curriculum.

In the academic year 2023-2024, RA, led by Mrs. Yuliyanti, S.Pd., had 12 teachers and 5 classrooms, with each class having 2 teachers, one as the homeroom teacher and one as the assistant teacher. The school principal of RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti holds a bachelor's degree (S1) from the Ma'arif NU Institute of Islamic Education (IAIMNU) in Metro Lampung, which is now known as Lampung Ma'arif University (UMALA). One teacher graduated from Universitas Terbuka, one from STIT BU, and five from IAIMNU. Additionally, four other teachers are pursuing early childhood Islamic education at UMALA. The essence of this research is to understand how the parenting style of single parents fosters social and emotional development in 4-5-year-old children at RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti. Anak Tuha, Lampung Tengah Regency is the focus.

**Single Parenting Style**

The researcher focused on issues related to Single Parenting Examples in Cultivating In-Depth Social Children aged 4-5 Years to understand various examples of single parenting that influence the various characters that emerge in children.

Thus, the researcher conducted observations with the parents of students about the Single Parenting Style in Developing the Social Emotional of 4-5-Year-Old Children at RA Bustanul Ulum Jayasakti Anak Tuha, Lampung Tengah, in the academic year 2023-2024. Based on the data collected from the beginning by the researcher, it was found that the social independence, social intelligence, and social character of children raised by single parents were similar to those of children of the same age with two parents. The researcher observed that these children were able to socialize well with their environment, teachers, and peers. The researcher also observed that children raised by single parents did not feel a lack of affection and did not feel the absence of either their father or mother.

From the observations at RA Bustanul Ulum, it was found that 5-8 children were raised by single parents, with 4 of them living with single mothers due to the father's death, remarriage, or divorce, 1 child living with his father due to divorce, 2 children raised by guardians (uncle and aunt), and 1 child raised by grandparents. The researcher also found that children raised by single parents had a normal life in their environment like other children with two parents. From the research conducted by the researcher, it was found that parents did not isolate or prohibit their children from socializing with their
environment, family, school, playgrounds, and places of study. They could play like other children, socialize well, and cry like others when disappointed during interactions with the environment.

Based on the interview results with Mrs. Hanifatul Latifah, one of the single mothers, regarding the parenting style of single parents in developing the social emotional of children, she stated:

"the parenting style applied is firm but not with physical violence. Before my husband passed away, discipline was already applied to the children. So, after his passing, I just continued the parenting style that had been applied to the children all along."

At the same time, the researcher also had a meeting with Mr. Achmad Soedarto, a single parent. The researcher asked Mr. Soedarto about the significant social progress in children and the consequences of single parenting. He clarified the matter:

"The parenting style I applied was the same even when the mother was present, but I struggled with having to work and also take care of the children. After our separation, this child did not show any significant change in behavior; he continued to engage in the same activities such as schooling, Quran recitation, and playing with his friends."

A child’s behavior reflects that of their parents, and even if the child does not live with their biological mother or father, the role of the closest person, such as family, also impacts the formation of the child's character. A statement from Mrs. Suerni, who is a guardian, as the mother had gone to work elsewhere and the father had passed away, said:

"The parenting style I apply as the guardian is the same as the parenting style my sister (the mother) applied at home. I just continue what has been given by her, and due to economic limitations, she entrusted her child to me as her younger sibling, especially since there is no longer a father figure."

From the interviews above, the researcher included the results of documentation regarding the parenting style of single parents in developing the social emotional of 4-5-year-old children as follows:

![Figure 1. Interview with Single Parent](image1.jpg)

After conducting interviews with single parents about parenting patterns applied to children, below is a picture of the results of documentation that shows the independence of children, as follows:
On the next day the researcher conducted an interview with Mrs. Lilik Maslakhirah as the homeroom teacher of 4-5 year old children related to the social emotional behavior and social development of children who have single parents, she gave the following response:

"In my view, there are no significant differences that affect the character of children with single parents either socially emotionally, cognitively, independence, and children's self-confidence, on average the same between one child and another. Even in class, children do activities naturally, there is no prominent behavior when it comes to the status of children who have single parents, but differences in children's character still exist whether they have single parents or double parents. Children who have a single parent want more attention, but this also applies to children who have a double parent, I can conclude that this behavior is still reasonable."

In view of the consequences of the above scientist-led meeting, experts assume that there is nothing clear about the parenting style used by sole guardians, the parenting pattern they apply as sole guardians is remembered as the majority rule parenting pattern which generally recalls an open attitude between parents and children. This type of parenting is considered the best and is generally distinctive compared to other parenting designs. This parenting style provides a valuable open door for the younger generation to be creative according to their age and capacity with parental direction in a positive direction.

Children's behavior is influenced by parents, and the role of the closest people such as family also has an impact on the formation of children's character. In single parent parenting in RA Bustanul Ulum, children who have single parent and double parent parents do not have significant differences, they are like children in general. The social-emotional development of each child develops as expected, although there are still children who have not developed as expected, but not only from children who have single parents but from double parents also experience the same thing.

These results are in accordance with the theory of Ermontina Nirhu, Marsiaunus Meka and Andi Nafisia, who stated their research based on Tridhonanto’s opinion that the impact of popularity-based parenting applied by parents on children in general is that
children will have a high spirit of friendship and have many friends. Deep guidance to the younger generation in equitable parenting makes children have a high spirit of friendship and not rebel when their longing is not satisfied (Nirhu et al., 2023). In accordance with the assessment put forward by Denham and Saarni that children who can manage their feelings well will more easily foster better relational relationships (Nirhu et al., 2023).

Based on the theory described by Ermontina Nirhu, Marsiaanus Meka, and Andi Nafsia, as well as referring to research conducted by Tridhonanto in 2014, the results of interviews with Mrs. Lilik Maslakhah show conformity with these findings. The theory emphasizes the positive impact of democratic parenting applied by parents on children. This democratic parenting not only includes the inclusive aspect of setting rules and boundaries, but also involves acknowledging children’s feelings and emotions and providing space for children to express their opinions.

In this context, the interview results showed that single-parent children, especially those living with their mothers, did not show significant differences in social, emotional, cognitive, independence and self-confidence characteristics compared to children with both parents. This conclusion is consistent with Tridhonanto’s findings that democratic parenting tends to produce children who have a high social spirit and are able to establish positive interpersonal relationships with many friends (Nurjianti, 2018).

Furthermore, children’s emotional regulation in democratic parenting also affects children’s ability to overcome conflict without rebelling when their wishes are not fulfilled. This is in line with the views of Denham and Saarni, who emphasize the importance of children’s ability to regulate their emotions as an important factor in the formation of positive relationships (Kartika et al., 2022). Thus, the results of the interviews provide concrete evidence that democratic parenting applied by parents, whether they are single or dual, has a positive impact on children’s social and emotional development, reinforcing the findings stated in theory and previous research (Nurjianti, 2018).

Role of Single Parents

Family plays a crucial role in the continuous upbringing and development of a child’s personality in accordance with personal values recognized by society. Children aged 0 to 12 still greatly require guidance, direction, and instruction from parents in cultivating basic characteristics, which involve possessing qualities valued by society and being able to apply them in daily life (Irmalia, 2022). Family remains the primary gateway for a teenager to learn and receive education. Since introduced naturally to the world, a child will receive parenting styles within the family provided by their guardians. In facilitating teenage education, parents must also have a good parenting style within the family (Lickona, 2012). A good parenting style involves the education given by parents to their children. In this era, many children are raised by single parents, due to various factors such as the death of a spouse, divorce, early marriage, and others (Lickona, 2012).

From the interviews conducted by the researcher with a source named Ms. Imi Lasmi, she explained the role of single parents in shaping the social-emotional aspects and meeting the needs of children. Ms. Imi provided an explanation as follows: “The role of the father as the head of the household is replaced by the mother if the father leaves, and vice versa. However, it does not mean instilling in the child’s mind that the absent father and mother have no role whatsoever in their lives. As someone who now holds the status of a
single guardian, I have a special role for my children, not only in household matters but also in providing sustenance, taking the children to school, fixing broken toys, and much more."

The next day, the researcher met with a single mother named Ms. Sarmini, who asked Ms. Sarmini about the role of single parents in deepening social improvement in children, which she understood as follows: "The upbringing I provide is the same as what I did for my older children, with the difference being that the youngest child does not have a father figure. As a mother, I see my child developing similarly to my older children. The child can understand their mother's situation, get along with their siblings, and not face teasing or bullying in the environment."

As shown in the figure below from the researcher's documentation in the interview with single parents regarding their roles after becoming single parents, as follows:

**Figure 3: Single Parent Activities to Take Children to School**

Double-parent families do form the perfect character for some children with the parenting given from the father and mother. Children with single parents raised by one of the parents do not rule out the possibility of having a trait that leads to negativity. This was conveyed by Mrs. Yuliyanti as the principal of RA Bustanul Ulum, that:

"The role of teachers in dealing with children raised by single guardians or complete parents is the same. There are no things that we call intensely on children with the background of their parents' circumstances. It can be said that in the 2023-2024 school year there are many children who have a single parent or one, especially in grades 4-5 years. Teachers have no special handling in dealing with these children. These children develop in accordance with other children. As for the role that the teacher plays in class, such as explaining the theme of the family where in the family there are father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, and others, the teacher explains the duties and position of each family member in front of the children both who have a single or intact guardian. For special handling or the teacher's role in dealing with students with single guardians is the same as that of children with intact parents."

From the results of the interviews of the 3 sources above that researchers conducted with the majority of single parents, they gave the opinion that single parents must provide understanding to children regarding the loss of a father or mother, because they have the right to know what happened. In RA Bustanul Ulum, children who have single parents can
understand the circumstances they experience, the departure of their father or mother does not cause negative behavior but most of them behave positively.

The interviewees emphasized the importance of parents’ role in shaping children’s character. Despite the hardship, they still provide consistent care and fulfill their children’s social-emotional needs. This underlines that even in difficult situations, the role of parents remains central in children’s development (Zuriati, 2021).

The principal of RA Bustanul Ulum, Mrs. Yuliyanti, stated that teachers do not differentiate the treatment of children with single or full parents. Although there are many single-parent children in the school, they are treated the same as other children. Teachers still teach about the concept of family without differentiating between parents’ backgrounds. In addition, the school policy provides school fee waivers for children with single parents, but the handling and role of teachers towards them remains the same as children whose parents are intact.

The research findings confirm that being a single parent is a big challenge, and to overcome this challenge, strong support from family, friends, and the surrounding environment is needed, in accordance with the concept stated by Kurnia Dwi Cahyani by referring to Magdalena’s opinion. Research conducted by Nurfadillah in East Bojong Village, Magelang also highlighted that one of the main obstacles faced by single parents is the absence of a father or mother figure as a role model for children. This confirms that in single parent family situations, the absence of one parent often results in a lack of models or examples for children in the formation of their character and behavior (Fadillah, 2015).

Children’s Social Emotional Skills

Social-emotional progress in children develops from the child’s relationship with their parents or environment. Young children begin to collaborate with others, not just with family. Increased close association with the child’s home in understanding how to communicate feelings thoroughly, both good feelings and sad feelings. Children can get along well with their friends or adults around them (Maria & Amalia, 2018). Social emotional improvement in adolescents is the growth of children’s experience in interacting with people around them in accordance with social principles and children are better prepared to control their feelings in accordance with the ability to distinguish and communicate their feelings which are acquired progressively and through endless performances (Nurjannah, 2017).

In an interview, the researcher went to a resident named Mrs. Meti Murniati, who is a single parent, in the interview the researcher asked about the development of children’s independence, Mrs. Meti gave the following explanation: "My child is an active child, even though I am now a single parent (widow) because his father died, there is nothing different from my child’s interaction with friends and the environment, everything goes as when his father is there. With time, I gave an explanation that the father was no longer there and the mother had to replace the father. After hearing this explanation, my child began to understand with his ability, I taught the child how to use his own clothes, eat alone, take his own drink, start learning to bathe alone, I began to apply various parenting to form children’s independence ".

On the following day the researcher came to RA Bustanul Ulum school to conduct an interview, in an interview conducted by the researcher with Mrs. Lilik Maslakhah as the
homeroom teacher, related to children's social emotional development and children’s independence in the school environment, she stated that: "In the independence of learning, playing, following activities when indoor, outdoor, following instructions, and understanding children who have single parents can do this. As for how to develop children's social-emotional in the classroom, by doing activities that develop self-confidence, develop patience, gratitude, interact with friends, and other activities. Their independence is the same, in wearing shoes can already be alone, although there are still reversed between left and right shoes, in healthy eating children have eaten themselves, their own canteen, all children in the development of social independence are equal and balanced according to their age."

As explained from the results of the researcher's documentation in conducting classroom observations, as follows:

![In-Class Activity for Children of Single Parents](image)

**Figure 4. In-Class Activity for Children of Singgel Parents**

Based on the results of research interviews conducted by researchers, children's social-emotional development is influenced by interactions with parents and the surrounding environment. In an interview with a single parent. According to Mrs. Lilik Maslakhah, in class, there are not many obstacles. Children, including those from single families, can be independent in daily activities such as wearing shoes and eating by themselves. They are also taught to build self-confidence, patience and social interaction through classroom activities.

The researcher concluded that children from single parents in RA Bustinul Ulum show a variety of characters, but there is no inequality between them and children from complete families. Social-emotional, independence, and self-confidence of 4-5 years old children with single parents are well developed, they are able to do various activities such as wearing clothes, wearing shoes, bathing, and eating alone like other children.

These results are in accordance with the concept proposed by Adam Maulana, who emphasizes that single-parent parenting encourages children to become independent in helping themselves and their parents (Maulana, 2021). This approach is in line with the views of Wulan Antika Sari, who highlights the importance of moral learning by parents to children, especially in the context of democratic parenting that emphasizes values such as
deliberation and awareness of common interests. By doing so, children are expected to develop positive socialization and integration skills in society (Sari, 2018).

**Single Parent Barriers**

Based on the results of an interview with one of the single parent student guardians, Mr. Supriyadi, he explained as follows:

“As a single parent, I have factors that become obstacles in caring for children in interacting and socializing, such as family, environmental, and friend factors. In this case, the influential factor is the factor from the environment. The environment makes my current situation they have an alibi by saying that it is better to educate children with their opinions, or they compare how I am a student guardian in educating children”.

After leading a meeting with Mr. Supriyadi, the researcher also visited Mrs. Itna Warina’s home. In the meeting led by the specialist with Mrs. Itna Warina, she clarified the constraints in parenting in fostering children’s social and deep development, as follows:

“In performing my duties as a father and as a mother of two children, I have learned many lessons, I must be able to provide education as a parent, provide a decent life and also fulfill their needs. The support of my family, especially my parents and siblings, means a lot to me”.

From the above statement, the researcher concludes that the obstacles that single parents face come from family and environment, how the parenting that single parents do is criticized, so that single parents are not confident in caring for children. The inhibiting factors for single parents in RA Bustanul ulum mostly come from the family and the environment, where the family and the environment want to take part in the parenting activities they do. Single parents realize that every child has a way to develop according to their abilities without coercion.

Based on the interviews conducted by the researcher, both interviewees highlighted the pressure they received from the surrounding environment, which often interfered with the way they educated their children. Nonetheless, they began to realize that every parent has a unique approach to parenting.

In their struggles, support from family, especially parents and siblings, proved to be invaluable. However, there were also barriers from family and the environment that tried to interfere in parenting, making them feel hesitant and less confident in parenting their children. Despite facing challenges from the surrounding environment, these single parents remain confident in their ability to educate their children in the best way according to the child’s condition and needs. This reflects the strength and determination of single parents in facing challenges in educating their children.

The interview results are in line with the views of Ermontina Nirhu, Marsianus Meka, who identified one of the prominent factors as the age and education of the parents. Parents who are too young or too old tend not to be able to fulfill their parental roles optimally (Nirhu et al., 2023). In addition, it is in accordance with the theory of Kurnia Dwi Cahyani, which states that single parents are often encouraged to imitate or adopt parenting patterns that they see from their surroundings, including their family and friends. This suggests that the social environment plays an important role in shaping the way single parents parent their children (Risnawati, 2023). Thus, the interview results reflect the
complexity of parenting patterns and the influence of the environment on how single parents educate children.

CONCLUSION

Single parent parenting in RA Bustanul Ulum varies, but does not apply significant parenting patterns to children, single parents realize that each child has a different character. Researchers also found that children raised by single parents have a normal life in the same environment as children who have double parents. Parenting patterns applied by mothers or fathers as single parents apply democratic parenting patterns. Single parents who apply democratic parenting to children show attitudes that fulfill aspects of social emotional development such as being more responsible, open and disciplined. From the results of research conducted by researchers on the majority of single parents providing understanding to children regarding the loss of a father or mother. In RA Bustanul Ulum, children who have single parent parents can understand their parents' situation. Complete student guardians at RA Bustanul Ulum have the obligation to care for, supervise, fulfill children’s needs, educate, control and support children’s activities together or divide tasks, but after becoming a single parent, this obligation is carried out by one person alone without the presence and support of a partner.

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