

# Do Authoritative Parents Moderate Their Children Religious Attitude? The Influence of Level of Authoritativeness in Parenting Style to Religious Fundamentalism

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## ABSTRACT

Authoritative parenting style is scientifically known as the most effective one of the other two (permissive and authoritative) to raise children. In terms of religion, it is also considered as an effective one for religious education. Parents belonging to this category create their own vision and mission for their children and give the space for them to discuss and solicit their objectives. Being contrary to it, parents with an authoritarian parenting style take their group consensus or theological guidance. They impose their children on particular sets of rules which they believe as the divine origin. This study is, therefore, aimed to find if there is an influence of authoritative parenting style to religious fundamentalism based on their level of authoritativeness (high and low scores). The results prove that there is no significant influence of authoritative parenting style with religious fundamentalism.

## 1. Introduction

Religious fundamentalism has been the pivotal issues since the 1970s (Emerson & Hartman, 2006) a tremendous number of researches on the factors which bring about its formation have been incessantly conducted. Emerson (2006) reviews the phenomena documented in various researches to reach its essence, the causes of its resurgence, its possible impact on violence, and its compatibility with the modernity. Having turned to be the central variable, many scholars have searched the factors which manifest one's religious fundamentalism. Paloutzian (2005) elucidates the causes of religious fundamentalism which is obviously derived from the family background or social acceptance. Parents are the most powerful agent to proselytize and internalize the religious dogma. Secondly, the attraction of religious congregations in which they apparently proselytize literally their holy scriptures becomes a mesmerizing lure for non-believers searching spiritual pathways or the socially rejected people who find social support and acceptance from being into the membership there.

Parenting style is one of the parental factors which become the concern in terms of religious fundamentalism. Religious teachings, somehow, give guidance and references for parents to shape their children. Howard (2008) describe how religions influence parenting. In the moderate situation, religious parents show no differences from the liberal ones. The universal values such as warmth (love, nurture, and care), structure (protection, rules, and expectation), and opportunities (participation rights) present in both parenting of both moderately religious and unreligious parents. Vermeer (1993) conversely conclude that religion is not an important factor for raising children. Behling (2010) prove that religiosity shows its association with prosocial parenting but when one's level gets higher, they tend to encourage punitive parenting. Danso (1997) state that parents with high religious fundamentalism keep their children in faith and do not endorse them to be autonomous. Therefore, they approve the

corporal punishment. In some research compilations, religion, however, does positively influence parenting, and that religious intervention can bring benefit to parenting practice and improve the specific skills (Petro, 2017). Grille (2005) describes how parenting style is shaped by families with high religious extremism from four of the main world's religion. The institution, like religion, tribe, or country, where holy scripture literally becomes the code of law have led them to "maladaptive" behavior. The impact of religious background on parenting style is obvious and eventually can decrease the level of children religiosity itself (Lane, 2015)

Indonesia is one of the countries where the percentage of religious fundamentalist increases. Based on a study on religious thought and radical ideology for higher education lecturer in Indonesia, fifty-two percent of lecturers in Indonesia were categorized as inclusive, forty-one percent of lecturers as exclusive and seven percent of lecturers categorized as radical, while seven percent of lecturers who had a radical understanding, six percent was at the level of radical in mind, one percent was at the radical in attitude level, and none was at the level of radical in action (Purwanto, 2017). The government of Indonesia doesn't even encourage the fundamentalist movement and keep maintaining moderation in religiosity. The moderate clerics are supported to socialize the flexibility and acceptance of various interpretations of religious teaching. Parenting style becomes an interesting issue because it is assumed to be the factor which influences a proselytizing process.

The conation as one of the attitudinal aspects of religious fundamentalism is indicated from the survey conducted by Institute of study on Islam and peace led by Prof. Bambang Pranowo, Sociologist at Jakarta State Islamic University (Universitas Islam Negeri Jakarta), that from October 2010 to January 2011, 50% of students were favorable with radicalism, 52,3% of students and 14,2% justified the bombing attack, 25 % of students. 25% of students and 21 % of teachers agree with the replacement of

national ideology since it is no more relevant. Surprisingly, 84,8% of students and 76,2 % teachers agree with the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Indonesia. It was then strengthened by the survey from Pew Research Center in 2015 which reported that there are around 4 percent or 10 million Indonesian citizens support ISIS – they are mostly young generation.

There is a likelihood to interpret the religious fundamentalism more objectively by taking it as a social phenomenon. Anthony Giddens offered the definition of fundamentalism as the one manifested from the change in human life dimension from globalization. According to him, fundamentalism is alienated traditions which are conserved from the globalization which demand reasoning. Referring to this point of view, fundamentalism cannot be equated with fanaticism and authoritarianism. It is not related to what one's belief is but to how one holds his or her belief (Syafiq, 2015).

Religious identity development theory indicates that an authoritarian parenting style hinders a child to be autonomous and critical to developmental process related to their religious identity (Lane, 2015). Many scholars of Islamic institutes in Indonesia have studied the impact of parenting style on children religiosity. Authoritative parenting style is considered to be the most effective one to socialize Islamic values and morality (Amilin, 2012; Febriani, 2010; Zumrudiyah, 2014; Utami, 2018; Ratri, 2018). Being hardly risen as the likely influential factor for religious fundamentalism, this study is therefore aimed to find if authoritative parenting style influences religious fundamentalism.

## 2. Authoritative Parenting Style

According to Darling and Steinberg (1993), parenting has three aspects: goals, practices, and style. Goals refer to the expected outcomes of parenting or the values parents want to instill in their children. Practices are parents' actual behavior towards their children in order to achieve these goals; such as actively participate in children's activities, supporting their academic activities like helping them with their homework, grounding them, observing them, etc. Finally, style, in this context, means the emotional relationship between parent and child. It is however related to the method of parenting such as "what" and "how". For instance, parents may concern with their children academic achievement and therefore they oversee them doing their homework (what), but they might do so in different strategy (how). They can do it in an authoritarian or harsh way, but they can also do it lovingly and responsively. Parenting practices and parenting styles thus in part reflect parents' parenting goals, but in part, the practices and styles, together with the goals, result from the parents' overall value orientations (Kohn, 1963)

Within parenting behavior, parenting styles can be categorized into two dimensions namely demandingness which refers to the extent parents control their children's behavior or demand their maturity and responsiveness which refers to the degree parents are accepting and sensitive to their children's emotional and developmental needs. What makes it different from parenting practice is that parenting style is the emotional climate in which parents raise their

children while the parenting practices are specific actions parents apply in their parenting (Baumrind, 1991). The similarity in one's parenting style with others' can possibly have different parenting practice. The strategy applied by parents to maximize the outcome may vary despite that they belong to the same parenting style category.

Parenting styles are contextual and fluid. A parent usually feels comfortable with one only even though shifting one particular parenting style from another one is recommendable because a certain situation may not be compatible with one parenting style (Gardner, 1989). They are also never completely extreme which can be found in any measurements of parenting style where the label is given based on the highest score from one of four or three other categories. It also means that a parent might still have scores in the other parenting styles.

Baumrind (1971) elaborated three different parenting styles such as:

1. **Permissive** parenting is characterized by being receptive and affirmative towards children's expression and actions. Parent with this parenting style normally discuss with them the do's and don't's in the family. They don't impose their own on household rules to be compatible with their expectation. Parents with this parenting style play their role as a facilitator when their children need them. not as an ideal figure for them to imitate, nor as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering his ongoing or future behavior. They also encourage the children to be independent and avoid excessive control to meet their standards.
2. The **authoritarian** parenting prioritizes control and obedience. A parent has a set of standards which is usually absolute, theologically origin, and derived from a higher authority. In the application, children are shaped and controlled. They are not allowed to have their own self-will and autonomy. Preservation of order and traditional structure are highly valued aim and therefore parent passes it down to their children and ignores their self-determination. Verbal give and take are absolutely discouraged.
3. The **authoritative** parent still gives proportional direction to their children activities and at the same time encourage verbal give and take. The discussion always takes place when parent socializes household policy. They expect children to know why the rule is made to them and at the same time children are allowed to express their objections. In this parenting style autonomy and discipline are both equally essential. The exertion of firm control to children at certain points is still conducted, but no restriction on them. Parent's perspective is enforced but accompanied by the recognition to a child as an individual. Being different from authoritarian parenting which takes group consensus or theological sources as a reference, the authoritative parent has their own objectives and socialize it to their children with reason and power. Individual

child's desire as in permissive parenting style doesn't count either.

Authoritative parenting style is the one which is considered to work the best in molding children personalities. Vermeer (2011) argues that it creates children's qualities such as lively and happy disposition, self-confident about the ability to master tasks, well-developed emotion regulation, developed social skills, and less rigid about gender-typed traits.

In terms of religion, the authoritative parenting style is considered as the most effective to improve religious behavior and Islamic lesson (Yulisna, Munawar, & Suresman, 2016). While on the other hand, Lane (2015) argues that authoritarian parenting style impedes the autonomous process critical to religious identity development.

### **How Authoritative Parenting Style Influence One's Religious Fundamentalism**

Being within the realm of psychology, religious fundamentalism is basically not a horrifying terminology and those whose level of RF is high are not supposed to be stigmatized. However, many studies reveal that this attitude correlates with prejudice, social and belief rigidity, and intolerance even though it is not always that way. Before it is further elaborated theoretically, there are some important features of religious fundamentalism:

1. Attitudinal – RF consists of three components namely affects, cognitive, and behavior (conation)
2. Applicable to any religions – RF is not particularly related to one religion only. It is even owned by an atheist.
3. Different from orthodoxy – RF doesn't include a particular ritual or belief belonging to any religions.
4. Different from other fundamentalisms with rigidly held ideologies - RF is an overarching belief system that regulates not only religious thoughts but all conceptions; it is in essence, a "meta-belief" or worldview (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992)

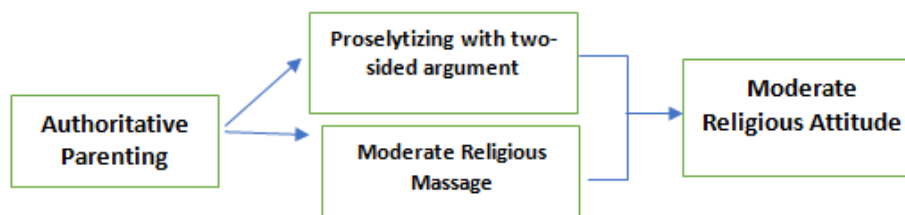
According to the most widely accepted academic definition, religious fundamentalism is: "the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by the forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the

fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity". (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2009)

Altemeyer (1996) concluded that religious fundamentalists of various religions have three common central beliefs: (a) they must return to the basics of their faith, (b) there is in an absolute standard of truth which is contested by evil, and (c) they have a special relationship to their deity and are assisting their deity in the fulfillment of God's purpose for humanity.

To simplify the elucidation on the relatedness between authoritative parenting style and religious fundamentalism, it can be started from the formation of attitude since RF is the one. It is clear that an authoritative parent never takes external authority or group consensus as the main references for raising their children. They maintain their independency to create their own objective for their children but don't hem them in the restrictions. On the contrary, a parent with high religious fundamentalism tends to be submissive to a higher authority. They don't trust themselves to make the blueprint they call their own for their children. Thus, RF as an attitude manifested in their children is the output of the continuous imposition of their religious dogma.

Most frequently, parents' religiosity is deemed to influence their parenting styles. It is indeed many scientific shreds of evidence which show that they are obviously related. Parents with high religious fundamentalism are prone to impose their religious attitude to their children. Some researches evinced that authoritative parenting brings about the good improvement in children religiosity, either in behavioral implementation or in their knowledge of religion per se. Religious fundamentalism seems to have negative connotation which is contrary to moderate religiosity. A mother or father with an authoritative parenting style usually give space for their children to elaborate any stimuli and at the same time monitor them. The proselytizing process they conduct is along with the discussion. Eventually, it prevents their children from cognitive rigidity because they don't forcefully impose their belief on them. In terms of attitude formation, good persuasion is the avenue to moderate their children religious fundamentalism because two-sided arguments are there. Ajzen (2005) implies that the two-sided argument is one of the variables which heighten the level of persuasiveness in a message.



In spite of that a parent falls into a particular parenting style category, they still have a certain level of the other ones.

A parent with a permissive parenting style, however, still have a particular level of authoritative and authoritarianism.

### 3. Method

#### The objective of the Study

This study limelight authoritativeness in a complete parenting style in which it is assumed that parents, in spite of being labeled a particular parenting style, still have the other two parenting styles with various level from each of them. Based on the theoretical compilations and scientific findings, hypothetically, authoritativeness in parenting style influences religious fundamentalism.

#### Participants, Procedure and Measurement Scales

Participants involved in this study are five hundred and twenty-four students of a private university in North Sumatra Indonesia, Medan Area University, which consist of four hundred women and one hundred and twenty-four men. They were randomly taken from six faculties. The data were taken while they were in the morning class. Permission was granted by university, faculty, and teachers taking the chosen class. All information on the study was given earlier before the data collection which includes informed concern and personal data covering: SES, personal information, religion education, and locale.

Scores for the Revised Religious Fundamentalism (RF) scale were obtained from an earlier survey in Hunsberger study (Altemeyer, 2004). The revised RF scale is a balanced 12-item measure, which assesses how firmly individuals hold the belief that there is one set of religious teachings containing the basic and essential truth about humanity and God (Altemeyer, et. al., 2004). For RF scale, respondents indicated their agreement to the items on an eight-point Likert-type response ranging from 1-8. The reliability and validity of the revised RF scale can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Validity and Reliability of Revised RF Scales**

Statistics	Students	Parents
<b>M. Inter-item correlation</b>	.47	.49
<b>r-Values</b>	.91	.92

Parenting styles experienced by the students are obtained by means of parenting style questionnaire which were built by Cici and Hidayah. They claimed that the items were made according to most Indonesian culture (Cici, 2012). Its format is Likert-type response from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" ranging from 1-4 and consists of three parts in which each sub-variable (permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian) has nine items. The indicators of each parenting style categories applied in the scale are broken down into four points for each sub-variable (see table2). The sample of items is "my parents give me the independence to opt for my aspiration as long as it is good for my future" (based on indicator one for the authoritative category).

**Table 2. Indicators of Parenting Style Scale**

Sub Variable	Indicators
<b>Authoritarian</b>	1. Parents restrict the space for the subject's activity
	2. Physical and verbal punishment orientation
	3. Limited parent-child communication
	4. Parental imposition to subject
<b>Permissive</b>	1. Control absence from parent
	2. Expressing minimal authority
	3. Less caring
	4. Adjusting to children wish
<b>Authoritative/Democratic</b>	1. Motivating subject to express freely but still socialize the limitations and monitor their behavior
	2. Giving reward to subjects
	3. Explaining and reasoning to any instructions
	4. Creating a parent-child communicative atmosphere

The other advantage of this questionnaire is that the level of one's parenting style can be indicated. The highest score one can get is 36 while the lowest one is 0. Since father and mother are not separated, the participants were asked to remember who more dominant is in the family in terms of parenting. To anticipate the confusion from parenting style shifting, they were, at the outset, informed that they could have different parenting style due to the maturity which brings about the change in the way their parents treat them. Hence, what they must fill is the suitable items related to experiences they have mostly passed through since they were still at their childhood. When it comes to its reliability and validity, both can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3. Validity and Reliability of Parenting Style Scale**

Variable	Category	r-values	M. p Inter-item
Parenting Style	Authoritarian	0.713	.45
	Permissive	0.756	.46
	Authoritative (Democratic)	0.701	.46

### 4. Result and Discussion

From the data tabulation, it revealed that all subjects (N=524) have been raised by parents with an authoritative parenting style which was obtained from the highest score at that category. The subjects are then divided into two categories of authoritativeness level of parenting style they have experienced: high authoritative parenting style (N= 207) and low one (N= 316). Parents with high authoritative parenting style have means difference as much as 1.883 higher than the low ones. Meanwhile, subjects of both categories have high religious fundamentalism (total means = 75.11685, the lowest score is 12 and the highest score is 96). T-test analysis revealed that there is no difference between high authoritative parenting style and low one to religious fundamentalism.

**Table 4. The Difference between High and Low Authoritativeness in Parenting Style to RF**

Variable	Authoritativeness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	p
Religious Fundamentalism	Low	207	74.5217	9.43235	.65559	1.436	.151
	High	316	75.7120	9.15801	.51518		

Apparently, authoritative parenting doesn't serve as a significant influencing factor to religious fundamentalism. Based on many studies, it is considered as one which can socialize Islamic values and morality (Amilin, 2012; Febriani, 2010; Zumrudiyah, 2014; Utami, 2018; Ratri, 2018). There are many possible explanations which can be further studied based on this outcome.

Religious fundamentalism is an attitudinal construct which can be formed not only within a family setting but also many contributors such as media, internet, peer, religious teachers. Despite being one of the most religious countries in the world, Indonesian parents, in general, don't teach their children religions themselves. Most of them have others educate their children religion (school, madrasah, or private religion teacher who regularly come to teach them religion and Al-Quran at home). The phenomena of parents with moderate religiosity owning high religious fundamentalism children are very common. This attitude is basically not fully formed in the family but while children have social interaction outside there. Discourses analysis is necessary to reveal the content of religious messages children acquired to find out which party possibly more contributive to their religious attitude. For the next researcher interested in revisiting this study, it is, therefore, strongly recommended to control some variables such as the frequency of parental proselytizing and religiosity. They are indispensable to know the strength of authoritativeness level contributing to RF. Furthermore, a parent's RF level can be included as a control variable if possible.

The other explanation of the insignificant difference between high and low authoritativeness in parenting style to RF is the issue on identity which, in fact, become a widely discussed topic on religious fundamentalist movement. Theoretical analysis elaborating religious fundamentalism movement will come to an end at the concept of an identity crisis (Monroe & Kredie, 1997). Fundamentalism is perceived as phenomena emerging during the crisis of many aspects such as political change, economy, society, and culture, and the most important thing is identity.

In terms of identity, the quality of each range of age is an important factor for personal identity and self-perception. Erikson argues that adolescence is the milestones in which someone deals with the process of identity formation and new developmental tasks. To overcome their identity crisis, they tend to participate in the movement to change the established social structure. Participation in such movements is necessary to affirm their identity. This study doesn't elaborate on the crisis lived by the subjects (Syafiq, 2015). Hypothetically, religious fundamentalism is possibly correlated with an identity crisis. Based on the descriptive data, there are

some likely factors which can be taken into consideration for the next study.

1. 66,13 % of male students and 62 % of female students live outside their hometown. They rent rooms and live with minimal control of their parents. The exposure of any information including religions might come from many sources besides their parents.
2. From the range of age of both groups of subjects belong to early adulthood in which crisis identity might still happen, parent-child relationship undergoes a new constellation. The parental imposition on them is no more effective and external factor outside the family become more influential such as friends, admired figures, and charismatic clerics.
3. Proselytizing during their study journey at university might mostly come not from family but the religious group. From the participated activities, religious activities are the most favorite. Based on personal data, 56.7% male subjects and 73.2 % female subjects participate in religious extracurricular (data taken from personal info form).

This research applies only the level of authoritativeness, high and low, to find whether it influences religious fundamentalism. It is likely to be another way to study comprehensively contribution of parenting styles to RF. Comparison with other parenting styles might be an appropriate topic to be taken for other researchers.

High religious fundamentalism can be differently perceived according to the cultural context. In this study, it is apparent that the subjects are mostly religious fundamental. The authors didn't probe the impact of this state and the subjects' perception of their own RF level. Within this issue, there are two essential points which are supposed to be concluded in the future research namely,

- 1) RF is culturally favorable and encouraged to be higher, or
- 2) The conditions of subjects participating in this study are basically a serious concern and must be moderated.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the level of authoritativeness in parenting style doesn't significantly contribute to the moderation of religious attitude. High authoritativeness in parenting is of insignificant difference from low one when both are compared with religious fundamentalism. The subjects from the group of either high or low authoritative parenting style have high religious fundamentalism.

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