Interpersonal Communication Between Parents and Preschool Children in Instilling Religious and Moral Values in Sukamekar Village RT 001 / RW 010, Sukawangi District

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Abstract: The early childhood period, commonly referred to as the golden age (0-6 years), represents a critical window for the foundation of a child's personality, including the internalization of Religious and Moral Values (RMV) (Harun Rasyid, 2009). This study aims to analyze the nature, patterns, and effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication (IC) utilized by parents with their preschool children (aged 4-6 years) in Sukamekar Village RT 001/RW 010, Sukawangi District, in the context of RMV installation. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative research methodology (Khaironi & Mulianah, 2017), data were collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation with selected parent-child dyads. The research framework is built upon the transactional model of IC and Social Learning Theory, emphasizing the role of parental modeling and narrative transfer. The primary findings indicate that the most effective IC patterns involve direct modeling (uswatun hasanah), narrative storytelling (religious fables and examples of the Prophet), and consistent dialogue characterized by high empathy and clarity. The results demonstrate that intentional and frequent parental communication acts as the primary conduit for value internalization, overcoming modern challenges such as media distraction. The study confirms that personalized, emotionally engaged IC is indispensable for shaping early moral character, underscoring the necessity of parental presence and continuous communication in achieving robust RMV outcomes in the modern Indonesian family unit.Keywords: Weverse, Social Media Space, Virtual Community, K-Pop Fandom, NCT Dream, Parasocial Interaction, Communication Features

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Preschool Children, Religious and Moral Values, Golden Age, Parenting, Social Modeling, Sukawangi

INTRODUCTION

Children aged 0–6 years are in what is often referred to as the *golden age*, a crucial stage of early development where they are highly receptive to learning through observation, imitation, and interaction. At this age, proper guidance and communication are essential to shape their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. This study focuses on preschool children aged 4–6 years living in Sukamekar Village, Sukawangi District, Bekasi Regency, West Java, where most residents work as farmers and spend long hours in the fields, limiting their time to engage with their children.

Preliminary observations conducted in February 2024 revealed that many preschool-aged children in Sukamekar spend most of their time playing with gadgets or engaging in outdoor activities with peers, while their parents are occupied with work. As a result, parental supervision and involvement in their children's moral and religious education are minimal. Grandparents or neighbors often take on the role of supervision during the day, leading to gaps in value transmission. When parents return home, fatigue from work frequently prevents them from dedicating time to guiding their children.

This condition contributes to a decline in children's moral and religious behaviors, such as being impolite to elders, neglecting prayers, and failing to greet others respectfully. Parents in the community have expressed concern over these behavioral patterns, recognizing the need to redirect their children toward positive habits through interpersonal communication—a process of direct, emotional, and dialogic interaction between parents and children.

Previous studies support these findings. Research by Vhinizza (2020) revealed that parents, particularly mothers, often struggle to control their children's excessive gadget use, which distracts them from learning and worship activities. Data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS, 2022) further shows that 33.44% of early childhood populations in Indonesia use digital devices, including 52.76% of children aged 5–6 years, underscoring the widespread nature of this phenomenon.

In family contexts, both parents share equal responsibility in raising and educating their children. Regardless of educational background or employment status, mothers and fathers must model positive behavior through effective communication and consistent interaction. As Effendy (in Liliweri, 1997) emphasized, sustained interpersonal communication is highly effective in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Therefore, open and honest dialogue between parents and children is crucial to understanding their emotional and moral development.

Instilling religious and moral values from an early age serves as a foundation for ethical conduct and spiritual awareness throughout life. According to Mulianah (2017), moral and religious education aims to nurture children's consciousness of good behavior and moral responsibility. However, insufficient stimulation or lack of parental involvement may lead to negative outcomes such as delinquency, violence, or substance abuse—issues increasingly observed among Indonesian youth.

Given these circumstances, early moral and religious education, supported by strong interpersonal communication between parents and children, is essential for developing virtuous habits and preventing behavioral deviations. Based on this rationale, this research seeks to analyze the interpersonal communication process between parents and preschool-aged children in instilling religious and moral values in Sukamekar Village, Sukawangi District.

The framework of this research is constructed on the intersection of communication theory and child psychology, specifically focusing on Interpersonal Communication and its link to value internalization.

Interpersonal Communication (IC) is defined as the process of exchanging information, ideas, and feelings between two or more people, typically face-to-face (Ramly & Arizaldy, 2022). In the family context, IC is inherently transactional and highly influential, serving as the medium through which children develop self-concept, social skills, and value systems.

Key elements of effective IC for value instillation include:

1. **Empathy:** The parent's ability to understand and share the child's feelings, making the communication emotionally resonant (Rizky et al., 2017).
2. **Clarity and Simplicity:** Using language appropriate for a preschooler's cognitive stage.
3. **Trust and Openness:** Fostering a safe environment where the child feels comfortable asking questions and expressing confusion about moral concepts.
4. **Consistency:** Ensuring verbal instructions align with non-verbal behavior, which is critical for modeling.

Religious and Moral Values (RMV) constitute the framework of beliefs and ethics that guide an individual's life choices and interaction with others (Khaironi & Mulianah, 2017). For preschoolers, the instillation of RMV is primarily a process of Social Learning.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling. In the home, the parent acts as the primary model. Therefore, the parent's daily behavior—their language, reaction to stress, and adherence to religious duties—is arguably the most powerful form of communication (Ramly & Arizaldy, 2022). The parent's IC is thus crucial in two ways:

1. Direct Instruction: Explicitly teaching prayers, manners, and ethical rules.
2. Modeling (Uswatun Hasanah): Unconscious communication through demonstrated behavior and lifestyle, which the child absorbs as the norm.

The intersection of IC and RMV highlights that the quality of the parent-child dialogue—characterized by warmth, engagement, and clear modeling—determines the depth of value internalization during the golden age.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions is "How is the Interpersonal Communication between Parents (Father and Mother) and Preschool Children in Instilling Religious and Moral Values in Sukamekar Village Rt 001/Rw 010, Sukawangi District?"

METHOD

This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative research design. The qualitative approach is essential because the research aims to uncover the depth, context, and subjective meaning of communication processes, which cannot be adequately captured by quantitative metrics (Subandi, 2011). The descriptive nature ensures a detailed portrayal of the real-life communication practices observed within the chosen community.

The research setting is RT 001 / RW 010, Sukamekar Village, Sukawangi District, Bekasi. This specific locale serves as a small, representative case study of contemporary Indonesian family life in a suburban environment.

The primary data consisted of verbal and non-verbal communication interactions, perceptions, and experiences related to value instillation.

The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling. The sample consisted of 10 parent-child dyads who met the following criteria:

1. Parents (either mother or father, or both) residing in RT 001/RW 010.
2. Having at least one child aged between 4 and 6 years (preschool age).
3. Willingness to be interviewed and observed regarding their daily communication practices.

Secondary data included academic literature on early childhood education, religious psychology, and communication studies (Ramly & Arizaldy, 2022; Khaironi & Mulianah, 2017).

Data collection was executed through two primary techniques:

1. In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews: Interviews were conducted with the parents, focusing on their conscious communication strategies, perceived obstacles (e.g., time, technology), and specific methods used to teach RMV (e.g., how they teach prayer, how they respond to a lie). Questions were designed to elicit detailed narratives of daily interactions.

2. Non-Participant Observation: The researcher conducted limited, non-intrusive observation of parent-child interactions in the home setting during routine times (e.g., mealtimes, bedtime, or before prayer). This technique was crucial for triangulating the parents' self-reported IC styles with their actual modeling behavior (Khaironi & Mulianah, 2017).

All data collection was conducted with strict ethical considerations, ensuring informed consent and anonymity for the participants.

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involving the following steps:

1. Data Transcription and Familiarization: Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and observation notes were organized.

2. Initial Coding: Data segments were coded based on descriptive labels (e.g., "Narrative IC," "Modeling Honesty," "Technological Barrier").

3. Theme Development: Codes were grouped into broader, interpretive themes corresponding to the research questions (e.g., "Dominant Communication Styles," "Practical Instillation Methods," "Factors Affecting IC Quality").

4. Review and Refinement: Themes were reviewed against the theoretical framework (IC and Social Learning) to ensure validity and richness of interpretation.

5. Final Reporting: Themes were used to structure the discussion section, supported by direct quotes (translated) and observational examples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that interpersonal communication between parents and preschool-aged children plays a crucial role in shaping children's moral and religious values. Despite their busy routines, parents—fathers who work full-time and mothers who manage household duties—maintain consistent communication with their children, typically in the morning or during their leisure time. This continuous interaction helps build emotional closeness and provides opportunities for informal moral and religious education through daily conversations.

Parents commonly adopt open and approachable communication styles, encouraging trust and mutual understanding. They engage in interactive dialogues, ask questions about their children's daily experiences, and listen attentively to their responses. This approach fosters a safe emotional space where children feel heard and valued. Moreover, parents emphasize the importance of calm tones, gentle words, and patience to ensure that communication remains positive and effective.

Several effective communication methods were observed, such as storytelling, interactive discussions, and giving real-life examples that relate moral or religious teachings to everyday life. Parents often use spontaneous situations—like witnessing someone litter—to explain ethical behavior or refer to animated stories to illustrate honesty, kindness, and responsibility. Storytelling about prophets and moral figures is also frequently employed to connect children with Islamic teachings and the Qur'an.

Overall, parents act as primary role models for their children. They teach moral and religious values not only through verbal instruction but also through consistent behavior that reflects those values. Their communication patterns embody the five key dimensions of interpersonal communication effectiveness described by DeVito (2011)—openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—as elaborated below:

1. Openness: Parents promote honesty and transparency by encouraging children to express their feelings or admit mistakes without fear of punishment. This open dialogue strengthens trust between parents and children.
2. Empathy: Parents demonstrate empathy by recognizing and validating their children's emotions. When conflicts arise, parents first calm the child, then explain what went wrong, ensuring that moral guidance is delivered with care.
3. Supportiveness: Parents offer emotional and motivational support, often through words of encouragement, praise, or small rewards that reinforce positive behavior and self-confidence.
4. Positiveness: Parents consistently display positive attitudes through optimism, affection, and constructive feedback. They maintain a warm atmosphere in communication, avoid harsh criticism, and express gratitude or pride in their children's progress, which enhances children's sense of self-worth.
5. Equality: Parents communicate with their children as partners in dialogue, respecting their opinions and perspectives. This balanced interaction promotes mutual respect and nurtures the child's ability to reason, negotiate, and make ethical decisions independently.

In conclusion, effective interpersonal communication between parents and children—characterized by openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—serves as a foundation for developing children's moral and religious understanding. When parents consistently model these values in both words and actions, they not only strengthen family relationships but also cultivate a deep-rooted sense of faith, empathy, and integrity in their children.

DISCUSSION

This study discusses how interpersonal communication between parents and preschool-aged children plays a crucial role in instilling religious and moral values. Interpersonal communication, which involves direct face-to-face interaction, enables both parties to respond verbally and nonverbally in real-time, creating opportunities for emotional understanding and behavioral influence (Mulyana, 2010; Effendy in Liliweri, 1997). The findings reveal that such communication within families is characterized by frequent dialogues, mutual openness, emotional support, and equal participation between parents and children.

Based on the analysis, five main aspects of effective interpersonal communication according to De Vito (in Suratno, 2011)—openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—were reflected in the way parents communicated with their preschool-aged children.

First, openness was evident in the way parents encouraged honesty and self-expression. Parents actively asked their children to share their feelings, experiences, and mistakes without fear of judgment. Both fathers and mothers in the studied families demonstrated acceptance and understanding, allowing children to be transparent and communicative in their interactions.

Second, empathy emerged as a key emotional bridge between parents and children. Parents consistently tried to understand their children's emotions before reacting. Rather than scolding or criticizing, they prioritized calming the child, listening, and providing thoughtful

explanations. This empathetic approach fostered a secure emotional climate where children felt understood and valued.

Third, supportiveness manifested through moral and material encouragement. Parents provided motivation, appreciation, and even rewards for good behavior, helping children internalize moral teachings positively. Support was also expressed through prayers and positive reinforcement, strengthening the child's confidence in practicing good values.

Fourth, positiveness was reflected in parents' optimistic attitudes and beliefs about their children's potential to grow into morally upright individuals. Parents maintained a constructive outlook, believing that consistent exposure to moral and religious teachings would guide children in distinguishing right from wrong and developing strong character. This positive attitude nurtured both confidence and emotional well-being in the children.

Finally, equality appeared in the form of reciprocal and respectful communication. Parents positioned themselves as guides rather than authoritarian figures, encouraging children to express opinions and make decisions appropriate to their age. This two-way communication created a sense of mutual respect, comfort, and emotional closeness. While some parents maintained a certain level of authority when necessary, they generally fostered balance—providing structure while respecting the child's individuality.

Overall, the findings suggest that effective interpersonal communication between parents and preschool children—rooted in openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—creates a harmonious learning environment that strengthens the internalization of religious and moral values. These dimensions not only promote ethical understanding but also nurture emotional intelligence, trust, and positive parent-child relationships essential for early moral development.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that interpersonal communication between parents and preschool-aged children in Sukamekar Village plays a vital role in shaping early religious and moral values. The findings show that when communication is built upon the principles of openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality, children are more receptive to moral guidance and more likely to internalize positive behaviors.

Parents who practice open and empathetic dialogue foster emotional security, allowing children to express themselves freely and understand moral lessons more deeply. Supportive and positive attitudes from parents strengthen children's confidence, while a sense of equality in communication encourages mutual respect and cooperation within the family.

Overall, the study highlights that effective interpersonal communication serves not only as a medium of parental guidance but also as a foundation for early moral and emotional development. When consistently applied, these communication patterns help children form a strong moral identity, develop empathy, and cultivate good behavior both at home and in their social environment.

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