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The Relationship Between Grandparenting Styles and The Independence of Children Aged 4–6 Years

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Abstrak

Kemandirian pada masa kanak-kanak awal adalah kemampuan anak dalam melakukan aktivitas dan mengambil keputusan secara mandiri sesuai dengan tahap perkembangannya. Salah satu faktor yang memengaruhi kemandirian tersebut adalah pola asuh kakek-nenek yang diterapkan oleh kakek-nenek sebagai pengasuh utama yang menggantikan peran orang tua. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara pola asuh kakek-nenek dan kemandirian anak usia 4–6 tahun di Desa Pringanom, Kecamatan Masaran, Kabupaten Sragen. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasi. Seluruh populasi yang terdiri dari 35 responden dijadikan sampel penelitian melalui teknik total sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menyebarkan kuesioner mengenai pola asuh kakek-nenek dan kemandirian anak yang diisi oleh kakek-nenek. Sebelum digunakan dalam penelitian, instrumen tersebut terlebih dahulu diuji kualitasnya melalui pengujian validitas dengan teknik Pearson Product Moment dan pengujian reliabilitas menggunakan Cronbach's Alpha. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis menggunakan korelasi Pearson Product Moment dengan bantuan SPSS versi 26. Hasil analisis menunjukkan nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,070 ($p > 0,05$) dan koefisien korelasi sebesar 0,310. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pola asuh kakek-nenek tidak memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan kemandirian anak usia 4–6 tahun. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa tingkat kemandirian seorang anak kemungkinan lebih dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor lain, seperti lingkungan pendidikan, pengalaman interaksi sosial, dan karakteristik individu masing-masing anak.

Kata kunci: *pola asuh kakek-nenek 1; kemandirian anak 2; masa kanak-kanak awal 3*

Abstract

Early childhood independence is a child's skill in carrying out activities and making decisions independently according to their developmental stage. One factor that influences

independence is the grandparenting parenting pattern implemented by grandparents as the primary caregivers in place of parents. This research study aims to analyze the relationship between grandparenting parenting patterns and the independence of children aged 4–6 years in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The entire population of 35 respondents was used as a research sample through a total sampling technique. Data collection was through distributing questionnaires regarding grandparenting parenting patterns and child independence filled out by grandparents. Before being used in the study, the instrument was first tested for quality through validity testing with the Pearson Product Moment technique and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha. The collected data were then analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation with the help of SPSS version 26. The analysis results obtained a significance value of 0.070 ($p > 0.05$) and a correlation coefficient of 0.310. These findings indicate that grandparenting has no significant relationship with independence in children aged 4–6 years. This indicates that a child's level of independence is likely more influenced by various other factors, such as the educational environment, social interaction experiences, and individual characteristics of each child.

Keywords: grandparenting parenting style 1; children's independence 2; early childhood 3

Introduction

Parenting is a method or approach used by parents to raise children, foster independence, develop character and personality, and instill values so that children can adapt to their environment (Fono, 2021). Parenting can also be understood as parents' attitudes and practices in caring for children, including guiding, educating, protecting, and developing discipline as children move toward maturity, while forming social values that are consistent with community expectations (Nur Utami & Raharjo, 2021). In a supportive family, parenting is carried out jointly by parents. Fathers and mothers support one another in guiding and educating their children. They are also actively involved in observing and monitoring children's growth and development. Through parenting, children are prepared to live in an orderly manner in accordance with the rules and norms prevailing in their social environment.

The family is the first environment that plays an important role in shaping children's development and personality from an early age. Through family interactions, children gain initial experiences of values, norms, behavior, and routines that influence their growth and development. Parents have the primary responsibility for providing care,

guidance, and stimulation appropriate to children's developmental stages. Parenting practices within the family are an important component that can influence children's social, emotional, and independent development (Fitriani et al., 2023). Parenting refers to a series of behaviors and interactions performed by caregivers or parents to guide, educate, and direct children so that they can develop optimally in accordance with social norms and environmental demands (Mustika, 2022).

Independence is an important developmental aspect that should be fostered from early childhood. Children's independence can be understood as their ability to perform activities, make simple decisions, take responsibility, and adapt without depending on other people's assistance (Afdal, 2022). Children with good levels of independence tend to be more confident, able to interact with their social environment, and better prepared to cope with various situations in life. According to Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, children aged 4–6 years are in the initiative versus guilt stage, when they begin to develop initiative, try various new activities, and build self-confidence through social experiences in their environment (Kamilla et al., 2022). At this stage, children need opportunities to perform various activities independently in order to develop responsibility and self-control.

Children's independence can be observed through several indicators, including physical ability to perform daily activities, self-confidence, responsibility, discipline, social skills, sharing, and emotional control (Yamin & Sanan, 2013). Independent children tend to adapt more easily to school and social environments. Conversely, children with lower independence may have difficulty completing simple tasks, depend on assistance from others, and show less optimal emotional and social control (Nazifa, 2022). Therefore, independence needs to be developed from an early age through consistent habituation and stimulation in both family and school environments. Independence also helps children develop self-confidence, decision-making skills, responsibility, and emotional management (Maladjai et al., 2025).

Social and economic changes in society have led to changes in child-rearing practices within families. Parents' work commitments often result in childcare being transferred to other family members, particularly grandparents. This condition is known as grandparenting, namely a caregiving pattern in which grandparents care for their grandchildren as a substitute for parents (Li et al., 2019). Grandparenting is a form of care provided by grandparents to their grandchildren. Responsibilities that should normally be

carried out by biological parents may, under certain circumstances, be transferred to grandparents, particularly when parents are busy working. In rural areas, this condition is relatively common, with children being cared for by their father's or mother's parents, namely their grandparents (Mukminah & Hasanah, 2022). Grandparenting commonly occurs because parents have demanding jobs, limited time to accompany their children, or particular family circumstances such as divorce or the death of a parent (Rahmatullah et al., 2023). In practice, grandparenting has characteristics that differ from parental care because it is influenced by caregivers' age, life experience, health condition, educational background, and patterns of family interaction.

Grandparents' involvement in childcare has diverse effects on the growth and development of young children. Grandparents generally provide emotional support, protection, attention, and affection to their grandchildren (Pagarwati & Rohman, 2020). However, in some circumstances, grandparenting may also cause children to become overly dependent because caregivers may provide excessive assistance and limit opportunities for children to learn independence. In addition, Larasati and Lestari (2023) explained that grandparenting is influenced by factors such as caregivers' age, the social environment, and relationships between parents and grandparents, resulting in different effects on children's development.

Previous studies have reported different findings regarding the relationship between grandparenting and early childhood independence. Mustika (2022) found a significant correlation between grandparenting and children's independence. Meanwhile, other research indicates that children's independence is not determined solely by the parenting practices provided by caregivers, but is also influenced by the school environment, social experiences, individual characteristics, and the family's socioeconomic conditions (Pujianti & Trimuliana, 2026). These differences suggest that the relationship between grandparenting and children's independence requires further investigation, particularly across different family environments and characteristics.

Initial observations in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency, indicated that most children aged 4–6 years were cared for by grandparents because their parents worked. This condition limited the intensity of children's interaction with their parents, resulting in grandparents carrying out a larger share of caregiving responsibilities. Children's levels of independence also appeared to vary. Some children were already able to perform simple activities independently, such as eating, dressing, and choosing their own

games, whereas others still required adult assistance in daily activities. This phenomenon indicates differences in the development of independence among children experiencing grandparenting. Some caregivers gave children freedom to perform activities independently, while others tended to provide too much assistance in daily activities. These conditions resulted in different levels of children's independence.

Based on the description above, this study was conducted to analyze the relationship between grandparenting and the independence of children aged 4–6 years in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency. The findings are expected to enrich knowledge in early childhood education, particularly concerning grandparenting practices and the development of children's independence. The findings are also expected to provide considerations for parents, caregivers, and educators when providing appropriate stimulation to support children's optimal independence.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the relationship between grandparenting and the independence of children aged 4–6 years. The research was conducted in December 2025 in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency. The population consisted of all children aged 4–6 years who were cared for by grandparents. Because the population was relatively small, all members of the population were included as research participants using total sampling, resulting in 35 respondents.

The study involved two variables: grandparenting as the independent variable and child independence as the dependent variable. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to grandparents as the children's caregivers. The grandparenting instrument was developed based on democratic parenting indicators comprising the connection dimension, regulation dimension, and autonomy granting dimension. The child independence instrument was based on indicators of physical ability, self-confidence, responsibility, discipline, social skills, sharing, and emotional control. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 to 5.

The research instruments underwent validity and reliability testing before data collection. Validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment with the assistance of SPSS version 26. An item was considered valid when its significance value was below 0.05 and the calculated r value exceeded the r-table value of 0.334. The results indicated that 13

items of the grandparenting questionnaire were suitable for use, while two items, numbers 3 and 14, were invalid. In the child independence questionnaire, 18 items were suitable for use and three items, numbers 7, 19, and 21, were invalid.

Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is a widely used method for measuring internal consistency in questionnaires or psychological scales (Malkewitz et al., 2023). The reliability test was conducted to determine the consistency and stability of the data produced by the instrument items when used again under similar conditions. The reliability results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

	Pola Asuh *Grandparenting*	Child Independence
Cronbach's Alpha	0,871	0,803
N of items	13	18

Table 1 shows that the reliability coefficient for the grandparenting instrument was 0.871, while the coefficient for the child independence instrument was 0.803. Both values exceeded 0.60; therefore, both instruments were considered reliable.

Results and Discussion

The study was conducted in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency, with 35 children aged 4–6 years who were cared for by grandparents.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Reason for Grandparental Care

Reason for Grandparental Care	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Parents work	30	86%
Parents deceased	5	14%
TOTAL	35	100%

The findings showed that most children aged 4–6 years were cared for by grandparents because their parents were busy working (86%), while 14% were cared for by grandparents because their parents had died. These findings indicate that parents' employment was the main reason for grandparenting in Pringanom Village. This is consistent with the view that when parents face high work demands, childcare is often transferred to close family members, particularly grandparents, who are considered capable of providing protection, attention, and daily assistance. Grandparenting commonly occurs in families in which parents are busy working and therefore have limited interaction time with their children.

This finding is consistent with Roudlotun Ni'mah and Farida Isroani (2022), who explained that working mothers' busyness can affect childcare practices and the development of early childhood independence. In addition, Jannah and Candra stated that parents' work commitments can reduce time spent with children, potentially affecting the development of independence because children require consistent guidance, habituation, and interaction in daily life.

Tabel 3. Distribution of Respondents by Grandparenting Style

No	Parenting Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	**Demokratis**	**35**	**100%**
2.	Permissive	0	0%
3.	Authoritarian	0	0%
	TOTAL	35	100%

Descriptive analysis showed that all grandparental caregivers in this study applied a democratic parenting style. This condition indicates that caregivers generally practiced parenting that balanced affection, supervision, and opportunities for children to develop their abilities. Democratic parenting was characterized by warm communication, attention to children's emotional needs, and guidance accompanied by explanations of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. These findings indicate that grandparenting in Pringanom Village did not focus solely on meeting children's physical needs but also considered the development of their social and emotional skills.

Table 4. Mean Scores of Grandparenting Dimensions

Indicator	Questionnaire Items	Nilai Rerata	
		Highest Mean	Lowest Mean
Connection Dimension	1,7,12,27	4,57	3,88
Regulation Dimension	5,11,25,29,31	4,17	3,91
Autonomy Granting Dimension	9,18,21,22	4,08	3,80

The findings also showed that the connection dimension had the highest mean score among the dimensions. This demonstrates that emotional relationships between children and grandparents were relatively strong. Children received attention, a sense of security, and emotional support during caregiving. Such emotional closeness is an important form of support for young children's social-emotional development. However, the autonomy-granting dimension had a lower mean score than the other dimensions. This suggests that children were given fewer opportunities to participate in simple decision-

making within the family. The condition indicates that grandparenting tended to emphasize protection and attention more than freedom for children to learn independence.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Child Independence

No	Score	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	51-59	Low	6	17%
2.	**60-69**	**Moderate**	**15**	**43%**
3.	71-79	High	14	40%
	TOTAL		35	100%

Descriptive analysis showed that the overall level of independence among children aged 4–6 years was in the moderate category. Children demonstrated fairly good abilities in self-confidence, physical ability, discipline, and sharing with peers. However, their ability to regulate emotions still needed improvement. This condition demonstrates that children's independence is influenced by diverse social experiences obtained in both family and school environments.

Table 6. Mean Scores of Child Independence Indicators

Indicator	Questionnaire Items	Nilai Rerata	
		Highest Mean	Lowest Mean
Physical ability	1,2,3,4,5	4,22	2,08
Self-confidence	6,8	4,42	3,42
Responsibility	9,10,11	3,94	3,82
Discipline	12,13	4,02	3,71
Social skills	14,15	3,85	3,80
Sharing	16,17,18	4,20	3,91
Emotional control	20	3,65	-

Based on the analysis of child independence indicators, self-confidence had the highest mean score. This indicates that most children dared to make simple choices according to their preferences. They were able to choose games, express opinions, and interact with their surroundings without excessive dependence on adult assistance. This condition suggests that social experiences gained in family and school environments contribute to the development of children's self-confidence. According to Erikson's psychosocial development theory, young children are in the initiative versus guilt stage, during which they begin to initiate various activities independently to develop a sense of competence and self-confidence.

Meanwhile, physical ability had the lowest mean score among the indicators. This finding shows that some children still experienced difficulties when carrying out daily

activities independently, such as tidying their beds, dressing themselves, or completing simple tasks without adult assistance. This condition may be influenced by caregivers' habits of frequently helping children with their activities, thereby limiting opportunities for children to learn independence.

Before hypothesis testing, the research data were tested for normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test Results

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.	Conclusion
Pola Asuh *Grandparenting*	0,978	35	0,691	Normal
Child Independence	0,940	35	0,055	Normal

Based on Table 7, the Shapiro–Wilk normality test using SPSS 26 produced a significance value of 0.691 for grandparenting. This value was greater than 0.05, indicating that the grandparenting data were normally distributed. Meanwhile, child independence had a significance value of 0.055. Although the value was only slightly above the significance level, it still met the normality criterion because it was greater than 0.05; therefore, the child independence data were also normally distributed.

Table 8. Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table

		df	F	Sig.
Pola Asuh *Grandparenting* * Kemandirian Anak	*Deviation from Linearity*	16	1.103	0,420

The linearity test was conducted using SPSS version 26. The relationship between variables can be considered linear when the significance value of deviation from linearity is greater than 0.05 (Priyatno, 2024). Based on Table 8, the significance value of deviation from linearity was 0.420. Because this value was greater than 0.05, the relationship between grandparenting and child independence was considered linear.

Hypothesis testing produced a significance value of 0.070 and a correlation coefficient of 0.310. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Correlational Hypothesis Test Results

Correlations

		Pola Asuh *grandparenting*	Child Independence
Pola Asuh *grandparenting*	Pearson Correlation	1	0,310
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,070
	N	35	35
Child Independence	Pearson Correlation	0,310	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,070	
	N	35	35

Based on Table 9, the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was 0.070, so the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted. Thus, the findings indicate that grandparenting was not significantly related to the independence of children aged 4–6 years. Table 9 also shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.310, which according to Sugiyono (2022) falls within the low correlation category. The direction of the relationship was positive, meaning that better grandparenting tended to be accompanied by greater child independence. However, because the relationship was weak and statistically non-significant, grandparenting cannot be regarded as the main factor influencing children's independence. Independence among children aged 4–6 years may be influenced by other factors, such as the school environment, children's characteristics, caregivers' educational level, socioeconomic conditions, and interactions with biological parents.

The data show that there was no significant relationship between grandparenting and the independence of children aged 4–6 years. The Pearson Product Moment correlation produced a significance value of 0.070, which was greater than 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis (H_0), stating that there is no relationship between grandparenting and the independence of children aged 4–6 years, was accepted, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected. The correlation coefficient of 0.310 indicates a low positive relationship. Thus, although there was a tendency for better grandparenting to be associated with greater child independence, the relationship was weak and not statistically significant. Changes in grandparenting were not strongly accompanied by changes in children's independence. The findings suggest that grandparenting is not the main factor determining the independence of children aged 4–6 years; other factors, including the school environment, individual characteristics, caregivers' educational level, family socioeconomic conditions, and the intensity of interaction with biological parents, may be more influential.

The findings indicate that the hypothesis was not supported. Therefore, no significant relationship was found between grandparenting and the independence of children aged 4–6 years. Children's independence varied: some children were already independent, whereas others still required adult assistance. This indicates that independence is not entirely determined by grandparenting. The school environment and social interactions also contribute to the development of independence. Thus, grandparenting is not the primary factor because children's independence is influenced by other factors, including their environment, individual characteristics, and social experiences.

The findings are consistent with Erikson's psychosocial development theory, which places children aged 4–6 years in the initiative versus guilt stage, when they begin to develop initiative and self-confidence through social experiences in their surroundings (Kamilla et al., 2022). At this stage, children's independence is influenced not only by family caregiving but also by opportunities to try, explore, and interact with their social environment. In this study, all respondents experienced democratic parenting. Democratic parenting was reflected in attention, emotional support, clear rules, and opportunities for children to express their opinions. These conditions indicate that grandparents as caregivers attempted to create warm and open relationships with children. Pagarwati and Rohman (2021) explained that grandparenting plays an important role in providing emotional support and shaping young children's character.

Nevertheless, the findings show that grandparenting was not significantly related to child independence. Children cared for by grandparents can still develop independence when they receive appropriate stimulation and positive social experiences at school and in their play environment. Larasati and Lestari (2023) also explained that grandparenting is influenced by factors such as caregivers' age, social environment, and relationships between parents and grandparents. These factors can cause the effects of grandparenting on children's development to differ across families. In this study, most children were cared for by grandparents because their parents worked, meaning that interaction between children and biological parents was limited. This condition indicates that grandparenting functioned as a form of family support for meeting children's caregiving needs.

The study also revealed that the school environment and social experiences play important roles in children's independence. Children who have opportunities to interact with peers and participate in habituation activities at school tend to have better social skills and self-confidence. However, these findings differ from Mustika (2022), who found a

significant relationship between grandparenting and early childhood independence. The differences may be influenced by respondent characteristics, environmental conditions, sample size, and variations in family interaction patterns. In this study, children's independence appeared to be more strongly shaped by other factors, including social experiences, individual characteristics, the school environment, and the consistency of stimulation provided by the family.

Therefore, the findings indicate that grandparenting can provide emotional support and a sense of security to children but is not the main factor in the development of early childhood independence. Children's independence develops through interconnected factors, including the social environment, learning experiences, individual characteristics, and the involvement of families and schools in providing consistent stimulation. Independence develops through habituation, social experiences, opportunities for exploration, and comprehensive environmental support. Therefore, positive collaboration among families, schools, and social environments needs to be established through consistent stimulation so that young children have optimal opportunities to learn responsibility, make simple decisions, and perform activities independently.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, grandparenting was not significantly related to the independence of children aged 4–6 years in Pringanom Village, Masaran District, Sragen Regency. The Pearson Product Moment correlation test produced a significance value of 0.070, which was greater than 0.05, and a correlation coefficient of 0.310. This value indicates a positive relationship with low correlation strength. The findings suggest that increases in children's independence cannot be directly explained by the grandparenting practices applied by grandparents. Children's independence may be influenced by various other factors, including the school environment, social experiences, individual characteristics, family conditions, and stimulation from the surrounding environment. Therefore, developing early childhood independence requires continuous support through collaboration among families, schools, and the social environment so that children have optimal opportunities to learn responsibility, make simple decisions, and perform various activities independently.

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