

Family Function and Academic Achievement: The Mediating Role of Noble Character

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Abstract. Academic achievement reflects the level of success students achieve in college studies. Based on observation, a prominent factor that typically influence this metric is family roles, particularly through the mediation of noble character. Therefore, this research aims to examine the mediating role of noble character on the relationship between family roles and student academic achievement. In order to achieve the stated objective, 201 college students were selected using cluster stratified random sampling, which served as the sample in this explanatory quantitative research. Accordingly, three key variables observed during the course of the exploration include family function, noble character scales, and student cumulative achievement index. A mediation test was also carried out using Jamovi statistical software 2.0.0 to determine the relationship between the key variables. The obtained results from the test showed that family function did not directly influence educational achievement. Instead, it only determined academic achievement through the instillation of noble character in students. Based on this result, an inference was made that noble character significantly mediated the relationship between family function and academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic achievement, family function, noble character, mediation, undergraduate student

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Introduction

Academic achievement is a reflection of the competencies possessed by students, which include knowledge, attitudes, and skills. According to previous research, the ability of students to carry out targeted work, such as assembling products, is a central measure of competency (Junaidi, 2020). Typically, universities assess academic achievement of respective students using various metrics, which is often reflected in grade-point averages or passing certificates (JDIH, 2023).

High academic achievement holds significant value, although not all students manage to meet these standards. For instance, a previous investigation reported that 54.7% of students majoring in health had an achievement index below 2.9 on a 4-point scale (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022). Accordingly, Wagner et al. (2022) found that approximately 24% of first-year students had low achievement indices and failed to meet respective learning objectives. Another

research, which was conducted by Mappadang et al. (2022) observed that 43% of students majoring in health and 6.1% of accounting majors had low grade point averages (Jalali et al., 2020). Other exploration showed that 29% of psychology and 51% of medical students faced academic challenges (Amelia, 2022; Huda & Mulyana, 2018).

Family functions have been observed to play a significant role in influencing academic success (Rezaei-Dehaghani et al., 2018). This metric refers to the ability of a family to fulfill obligations and preserve unity (Shek, 2016). In proper-functioning families, attributes such as harmony, emotional closeness, and sufficient support for both the material and non-material needs of the child, along with appropriate behavioral guidance. Meanwhile, low-functioning families often struggle with unresolved conflicts, mutual hatred and indifference, misinterpretation of emotions, deprivation of the physical and psychological needs of children, and a

lack of parental supervision or guidance (Lubis et al., 2022). According to previous research, these familial environments typically shape the personal development of children, alongside respective abilities to navigate academic challenges (Rushing et al., 2017).

Based on previous observations, a well-functioning family can alleviate academic stress and facilitate academic adjustment among students, and this invariably supports high levels of achievement (Shek & Wu, 2016). Harmonious family environments, which are typically characterized by strong parent-child relationships, mutual care, the fulfillment of essential needs, and appropriate supervision, are often associated with high academic achievement (Gana et al., 2023). This is evidenced by the report that parents who maintained good family relationships were the most probably to be more interested in the daily lives of respective children, providing the necessary support to foster academic success (Gu et al., 2024). It is also important to establish that specific parental support for academic goals has been found to have a greater impact on achievement of students than the general ability of the family to meet other obligations (Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020). Despite these insights, there remains a gap in research concerning how family function affects academic achievement. Considering the gap, this present research aims to determine whether family function influences academic achievement directly or indirectly through the mediation of other factors.

Research have identified several positive traits related to academic success of students. For instance, time management skills and metacognitive abilities have been found to correlate with higher academic achievement, as reported by (Moore, 2019), and (Iffland et al., 2016). Additionally, academic success had also been positively associated with objectives geared towards mastery and competence, intrinsic interest in learning, and the ability to manage stress and anxiety (Hamoud et al., 2018; Lüftenegger et al., 2016). Some explorations had elucidated that academic achievement scores of students were anchored by certain attributes, including self-control, a desire to avoid procrastination, and an all-round enjoyment of learning activities (Respondek et al., 2017; Živčić-Bećirević et al., 2017). In other words, academic performance is typically influenced by the attitudes of students toward learning and a genuine love for studying (Johnson et al., 2022).

The metric has been predicted using the perception of students toward criticism from others and the respective willingness to admit faults (Leighton et al., 2018). Key indicators of academic success include self-regulated learning, consistent effort, self-discipline, and help-seeking behavior

(Nabizadeh et al., 2019; Diseth et al., 2010; Al-Tameemi et al., 2023). Additional factors influencing successful academic performance include proper study and sleep routine, the avoidance of excessive social media use, and abstinence from drug abuse (Kassaw & Demareva, 2023). Consistency in studying, learning from past errors, persistence (Abdulghani et al., 2014), commitment, and emotional intelligence have also been correlated with the successful academic achievement of students (Crisp et al., 2015).

In addition to the various outlined factors associated with effective academic progress, other research has reported other very significant influencers. These factors include the consistency of students pursuit of respective goals, life satisfaction, perception of information value, and susceptibility to internet addiction (Maqableh et al., 2021), as well as a deep, intentional learning approach (Cassidy, 2012). In line with this, Wang et al. reported that personality traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness also influenced academic performance (Wang et al., 2023). Gender differences are evident, with academic achievement among women being affected by the respective aspiration to graduate, while the outcomes of men were found to be more influenced by family relationships, school location, and previous skills (Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al., 2017; Wrigley-Asante et al., 2023).

All these factors point toward the importance of cultivating positive character traits, which are closely in line with what is often termed "noble character." Typically, noble character comprises behaviors and tendencies that facilitate goodness and moral conduct (Crossan et al., 2017), and it embodies a natural inclination to follow universally respected principles (Xu & Ma, 2016). The Indonesian Ministry of Education outlined essential character qualities for students, including independence, cooperation, creativity, critical thinking, faith, and moral integrity (Wijayanti, 2023). This outline is in correspondence with previous research by Junus et al. (in Hasanuddin et al., 2024), which identified specific noble qualities, such as discipline, gratitude, generosity, humility, ambition, wisdom, consistency, truthfulness, responsibility, integrity, justice, positivity, compassion, resilience, self-control, hard work, and a social conscience.

Academic achievement (Mustafidah et al., 2022; Sagala, 2018), professional success and work-related adjustment (Rini et al., 2021), contentment in social relationships, mental health, and learner happiness (Ratunuman et al., 2021) are all influenced by noble character. Meanwhile, negative character traits are often associated with behavioral, interpersonal, and psychological issues (Sa'pang & Purbojo, 2019).

The literature review shows that family function impacted both academic achievement of and the development of noble character in students, which further influences learning outcomes. As stated by Yu et al. (2021), students who experienced comfort, love, protection, and a sense of worth within respective families typically possessed attitudes and behaviors oriented toward goodness. Lubis and Hasanuddin (2023) further emphasized that noble character in students was positively correlated with strong family functioning.

Based on the observations made from the reviewed publications, it can be inferred that noble character effectively mediates the influence of family function on academic achievement of students. Shek et al. (2024) reported that family function affected academic achievement through the mediation of spirituality, while Strambler et al. emphasized academic identification of students as a good mediator of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable (Strambler et al., 2013). Similarly, Otero et al. (2020) asserted that student character served as a mediator for the impact of parental role on academic success.

Despite the numerous available publications on this subject matter, a significant lack of research was observed in Indonesia specifically investigating the mediating role of noble character in the relationship between family function and student academic achievement. Therefore, this research aims to explore whether family function influences academic achievement directly or indirectly, with noble character serving as a potential mediator.

Methods

This quantitative explanatory research included the participation of 201 students at a University in Medan, all of which were selected through a cluster-stratified random sampling method (table 1). Initially, three faculties were selected from a total of eight using cluster random sampling. Subsequently, stratified proportional sampling was adopted to select 20% of students from these three faculties, resulting in 201 participants (Cohen et al., 2007). This research utilized scales to measure family function, noble character, and student cumulative achievement index. The family function scale assessed five aspects, namely mutuality, harmony, communication, parental support, and parental control (Lubis et al., 2024). Two scales were utilized namely a 32-item family function and a 24-item noble character scale. The 32-item family function scale showed strong psychometric properties (CVI=.86; CFA indicator: RMSEA =.049; TLI =.939; CFI =.945; Chi-square = 8892.122; p =.000, Cronbach α =.921), and was used to measure four distinct aspects namely giving the best, having

meaningful goals, having confidence in one's abilities, and being able to collaborate (Lubis et al., 2024). Examples of items incorporated in the scale include, "Family members talk to each other," "Family members support each other," "There is much friction among family members," "Parents love their children," and "Parents scold and beat children."

Accordingly, the 24-item noble character scale also produced an adequate reliability and validity index (Cronbach Alpha= .808, CVI= .7, MSA >.06, with loading factors ranging from .466 to .834). Sample items in this scale include "I listen to other people's input to improve myself," "I fulfill my promises to others," and "I easily get disappointed by unexpected reality and I give up on the complicated work." Both scales comprised favorable and unfavorable items with five response options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Table 1
Participants' Identity Description

Identity	n	%
Sex (N= 201; M=1.40; SD=.491)		
Male	121	60.2
Female	80	39.8
Religion (N= 201; M= 1.58; SD= .604)		
Moslem	97	48.3
Christian	92	45.8
Catholic	12	6
Etnicity (N= 201; M=2.02; SD= 1.153)		
Toba Batak	101	50.2
Other Batak	25	12.4
Javanese	45	22.4
Others	6	14.9
Age (N= 201; M= 22.02 SD= 4.114)		
19	12	6
20	54	26.9
21	39	19.4
22	32	22.9
23	7	15.9
24	2	3.5
25	11	5.5
Father Education Level (N= 191; M= 2.75; SD= .813)		
Primary	21	10.4
Secondary	29	14.4
High School	117	58.2
University	24	11.9
Mother Education Level (N= 201; M= 2.78; SD= .908)		
Primary	25	12.4
Secondary	35	17.4
High School	101	50.2
University	40	19.9
Residence(N=201; M=1.91; SD= .950)		
Boarding/rented house	100	49.8
Other family's	19	9.5
Parent's	82	40.8

Table 2

Variables intercorrelation

	Mut	Har	Com	Conc	Cont	FF	Best	SelfC	LifeM	Collab	PC
Har	.772***										
Com	.515***	.458***									
Conc	.519***	.524***	.408***								
Cont	.167***	.154***	.451***	.246***							
FF	.878***	.827***	.756***	.656***	.438***						
Best	.245***	.151*	.216**	.269***	.217**	.254***					
SelfC	.254*	.242*	.219**	.338***	.201**	.294***	.683***				
LifeM	.388***	.363***	.196**	.399***	.081	.385***	.341***	.376***			
Colla	.218**	.164*	.353***	.400***	.339***	.352***	.510***	.507***	.395***		
PC	.317***	.250***	.316***	.427***	.268***	.377***	.852***	.880***	.538***	.721***	
GPA	.222**	.176*	.123	.160*	.014	.192**	.268***	.280***	.248***	.270***	.368***

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001; Mut= mutuality; Har= harmony; Com=communication; Conc= parental concern; Cont= parental concern; FF= family function; Best= Giving the best; Self C= self-confidence and self-competence; LifeM= pursuing the meaningful life goals; Collab= collaboration; PC= positive character; GPA= grade point average

Academic achievement of students was measured using the respective Grade Point Average (GPA) of participants for the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. It is important to state that the research protocol for this investigation was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Indonesian Scientific Psychology Consortium (K-PIN) with the number 091/2023 Ethics/KPIN. In addition, all participants read and signed informed consent forms before completing the scales. Data analysis was then conducted using a mediation test with Jamovi statistical software Version 2.0.0.

Results and Discussion

Results

The skewness of the data was evaluated, and the results showed a kurtosis value of less than 12 alongside a skewness value of less than 3.00, signifying acceptable data distribution. Accordingly, the interconnection test results showed a positive association between noble character and GPA (table 2). The mediation test showed that noble character significantly mediated the effect of family function on academic achievement (Z= 3.053; p= .002). This result suggests that high family function leads to higher academic achievement primarily through the development of noble character in students (table 3). However, the analysis also showed that student academic achievement was unaffected by family function alone (Z=.832; p=.406).

Path analysis shows that family function significantly impacts noble character, and noble character influences academic achievement. Meanwhile, family function did not have a significant effect on academic achievement (table 4).

Figure 1 shows that noble character effectively mediated the relationship between family function and academic achievement of the observed students.

Table 3

Mediation test result

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Indirect	.00272	8.89e-4	3.053	.002
Direct	.00174	.00210	.832	.406
Total	.00446	.00209	2.134	.033

Table 4

Path Analysis of family function, noble character, GPA

			Estimate	SE	Z	P
FF	→	NC	.26009	.05914	4.398	< .001
NC	→	GPA	.01044	.00246	4.243	< .001
FF	→	GPA	.00174	.00210	.832	.406

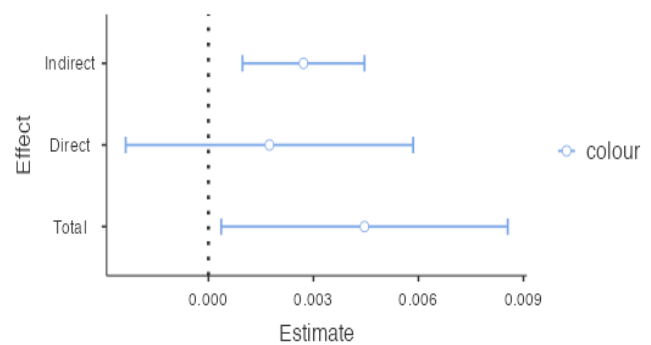


Figure 1. Mediation noble character on family function relationship with GPA

Discussion

The skewness of the data was evaluated, and a normal distribution was confirmed with a kurtosis value below 12 and a skewness value less than 3.00 (Weston & Gore, 2006). Intercorrelation analysis showed a significant correlation between GPA and noble character of students. This implies that the cumulative success index of a student is highly influenced by the respective dedication to excellence, self-assurance in the inherent ability to succeed, the pursuit of

meaningful goals, and capability for forming interpersonal relationships (Wagner & Ruch, 2015).

Higher GPA is associated with students who possess attributes such as determination, self-assurance, desire to reach greater goals, and strong social connections. Meanwhile, students with lower GPA often study hard but modestly, mistrust respective abilities, go to school without a defined goal in mind, and struggle to form social bonds. Based on the finding, it was inferred that for students to receive good results, consistent efforts, accurate task completions, resilience in the face of adversity, and seeking support from friends and lecturers are required.

The analysis showed that there was a correlation between GPA and family function. However, parental control and communication were not significantly associated with GPA. It was also found that students from harmonious and nurturing families whose needs are always met, tend to feel safe and at ease. This emotional stability enables the demographic to focus on academic tasks and complete assignments effectively, resulting in higher GPAs (Rezaei-Dehaghani et al., 2018). No significant relationship was observed between parental direction or emotional closeness with family members and GPA, instead professors and peers on campus were found to often serve as key figures providing emotional support and academic guidance.

All aspects of noble character positively correlated with family function components, except for parental control over the pursuit of meaningful life goals. Based on the observation made, a well-functioning family typically fosters noble character through close relationships, self-care, fulfillment of needs, and behavioral guidance. Students who feel secure, respected, and confident in respective parents were more probable to possess positive behavior and support defined developmental goals. However, in line with previous research, parental supervision and socialization efforts did not appear to motivate students toward achieving meaningful learning objectives, which may instead be shaped by the influence of peers and lecturers (Kohnke & Sylvester, 2019).

The mediation test showed that family function did not directly impact student academic achievement but had an indirect influence through noble character. This result is in line with that of Lian (2008) which reported no direct correlation between family function and academic performance. The test result also emphasized that harmonious families who cared for each other, maintained emotional closeness, fulfilled needs, and provided behavioral guidance did not directly produce teenagers with high academic achievement. Instead, family function was observed to

impact academic success indirectly through factors such as self-efficacy (Silva et al., 2021). These results are not in line with Rezaei-Dehaghani et al. (2018), who reported a direct relationship between family function and academic achievement.

In accordance with the observations, it was inferred that noble character played a very important role in mediating the effect of family function on academic achievement. Students who come from well-functioning families develop noble character traits that drive high learning attainment. Furthermore, families that provide comfort, happiness, and clear life goals typically groom adolescents who strive to give the best, possess confidence in inherent abilities, pursue meaningful goals, and collaborate effectively. This character enables the adolescents to enhance respective academic achievement. The results are in line with the exploration by Aulia and Khafid (2018), where it was concluded that noble character effectively mediated the impact of family function on student learning outcomes. Essentially, high family function leads to high academic achievement only when mediated by noble character of students.

A well-functioning family fosters harmony, builds strong parent-child relationships, fulfills the needs of its members, and enforces appropriate behavioral control. This foundation equips adolescents to handle challenges associated with life, particularly in academics (Rushing et al., 2017). The elucidation is in correspondence with previous investigations, stating that high-functioning families provided essential academic support and promoted superior academic achievement (Gana et al., 2023; Gu et al., 2024; Pinguart & Ebeling, 2020). Families characterized by conflict, hostility, and lack of guidance, tend to raise children with weaker life goals, diminished ability to form social relationships, reduced achievement motivation, and low confidence in respective inherent abilities, which typically leads to inferior academic performance.

Path analysis further reflected that the learning achievement of students was significantly influenced by respective noble character. This implies that students with strong moral integrity tend to excel academically, while those with weaker moral traits often underperform. The observation is in line with a previous exploration, where it was stated that students who put forth best efforts are more probable to effectively process environmental information before completing tasks (Fletcher et al., 2020). These students are often humble enough to acknowledge limitations and work on respective shortcomings (Kibakaya & Oyeku, 2022), value the input and opinions of others (Singer & Klimecki, 2014), and actively assist peers in resolving challenges (Steinebach et al., 2019). The listed qualities enable

the set of students to approach respective academic assignments with diligence and success (Wigfield et al., 2021).

A person of noble character typically possesses self-confidence in inherent abilities and approaches to carry out assigned tasks with diligence and determination. This demographic believes in the respective intrinsic values and capacity possessed to achieve success (Ezzani, 2020). As supported by a previous investigation, adolescents with a positive outlook trust in respective abilities to complete assigned responsibilities, maintain confidence in overcoming obstacles, and persevere even in the face of challenges that could hinder educational success (Tenney et al., 2016). This group generally perceives difficulties as important life lessons that contribute to personal growth and resilience (Duckworth & Seligman, 2017).

Students with noble character were further observed to show a strong sense of purpose and well-defined life goals. These students derive meaning from actions contributing positively to the surrounding environment and are guided by values that direct respective efforts toward achieving set objectives (Nawaz et al., 2023). According to Arvanitis and Kalliris (2020), the demographic are morally aware, conscious of set goals, and understand the mediums to achieve the goals. The students possess unwavering commitment and diligence in carrying out endeavors, working tirelessly until success is achieved (Meng & Jia, 2023). This purpose-driven mindset has been reported to motivate students to study earnestly and strive for the highest academic achievement (Gamage et al., 2021).

Students possessing noble character recognize the interconnectedness of all individuals, valuing the contributions of others to respective achievement while acknowledging personal limitations (Zhang, 2022). This awareness inspires the set of students to treat others with kindness and respect, fostering relationships that are mutually supportive and beneficial (Jin, 2023). Accordingly, the interactions in this regard promote a collaborative spirit, enabling students to form bonds that provide critical support in overcoming academic challenges and maintaining high academic performance (Kim & Keane, 2023). The elucidation is supported by previous research stating that positive relationships with peers and mentors serve as essential resources for academic success, ensuring students achieve full potential (Romppanen et al., 2021).

The results showed that family function did not have a direct effect on academic achievement of students. Regardless of the fact that parents undeniably influence the success of children, this impact operates indirectly. Islam and Chakrabarty

(2020) emphasized that family factors, such as the educational aspirations of parents, significantly shaped the learning outcomes of children rather than direct academic inclusiveness. Therefore, it was inferred that a harmonious, supportive family where physical and psychological needs are fulfilled, values are facilitated, and emotional connections are maintained, did not necessarily guarantee high academic achievement in students.

The relationship between family environment and academic success is complex. This is evidenced by the fact that a loving and supportive family, specific life goals, and a comfortable home environment do not automatically translate into academic excellence. Following the observations made, families primarily act as external motivators, offering stability, comfort, and educational support. According to (Davis-Kean et al., 2021), the family functions more as a source of motivation and security. Parents often focus on maintaining discipline by monitoring homework, addressing academic challenges, or providing psychological support (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Schmid & Garrels, 2021). However, the responsibility of achieving academic success entirely lies with the students, as each individual typically needs intrinsic motivation to complete assigned tasks and attain respective learning objectives. This is in line with Martínez et al. (2019), who found internal motivation as an important factor for academic achievement.

Following academic success, family function was found to significantly influence the development of noble character in students (Sugiarti et al., 2022). As stated in previous research, a family that offers a sense of comfort, love, protection, and clear goals fosters noble character traits (Liu, 2023). Feelings of comfort typically promote positive feelings towards oneself and the environment, while feelings of love builds self-confidence and the ability to cooperate with others (Zakiei et al., 2020). Feelings of protection create emotional sensitivity and sense of purpose deliver persistence to achieve goals and meaning.

Noble character significantly enhances academic achievement through various mechanisms. These mechanisms include effective time management (Moore, 2019), stress management (Hamoud et al., 2018; Lüftenegger et al., 2016), self-control (Respondek et al., 2017; Živčić-Bećirević et al., 2017), a love for learning (Johnson et al., 2022), and openness to constructive criticism (Leighton et al., 2018). Academic success has also been closely related to self-regulated learning, sustained effort, help-seeking behaviors (Nabizadeh et al., 2019; Diseth et al., 2010; Al-Tameemi et al., 2023), consistent learning habits (Abdulghani et al., 2014), and emotional intelligence (Crisp et al., 2015). Additionally, goal-setting and personal happiness

(Maqableh et al., 2021) are essential factors that influence academic achievement.

This research offers practical implications, particularly for developing interventions targeting low-achieving students by emphasizing the role of noble character in fostering academic success. However, it is important to establish that the exploration possesses several limitations. Firstly, the scope of the research was restricted to students at University X in Medan. Different populations may produce varying patterns, hence, the results might not be entirely generalizable. Secondly, this research relies solely on the perspectives of students to measure family function and academic achievement. Incorporating the viewpoints of parents could yield alternative insights, and using official university-issued academic records would enhance the accuracy of achievement assessments. Thirdly, the use of self-report scales introduced potential biases, such as social desirability or response inaccuracies. However, measures such as informed consent and confidentiality were implemented to mitigate these issues. Lastly, this cross-sectional research did not capture the long-term consistency of the influence of family function on academic achievement. Future longitudinal research could provide a clearer picture of these dynamics over time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research examined how effectively the influence of family function on academic achievement was mediated by noble character. The obtained results showed that family function did not directly influence academic achievement, rather, an indirect but significant impact was observed through the mediation of noble character. This was evidenced by the observation that proper family function only translated into higher academic achievement when students possessed sufficient noble character. This research is expected to be helpful to parents, educational counselors, and universities, particularly when addressing concerns related to low academic achievement among students. Through the insights of this exploration, parents can be motivated to improve respective roles in establishing a happy family, fostering love, promoting effective communication, attending to the needs of children, and guiding conduct by working with universities and counselors to build noble character. Accordingly, in order to effectively instill noble characters, parents must establish clear rules at home, resolve family disputes, foster teamwork and collaboration, fulfill responsibility, show love and affection, inculcate values, and cultivate healthy relationships with children.

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