

The Influence of Single Parenting on Children's Character Development in Tembelok Neighborhood, Sandubaya District, Mataram City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of single parenting on children's character development in the Tembelok neighborhood, Sandubaya District, Mataram City. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, structured interviews, and documentation with single parents, children, and community leaders. The findings reveal that despite economic constraints and the dual roles faced by single parents, the dominant parenting style applied is authoritative, characterized by warmth, consistency, and clear but flexible rules. Daily practices such as greetings, respect for elders, discipline in worship, and participation in communal activities (e.g., religious events, mutual cooperation, and traditional ceremonies) foster positive character traits including honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and religiosity. The study also identifies three key factors influencing parenting outcomes: limited economic resources, educational background of parents, and the role of social support from extended family and community networks. These results highlight the importance of authoritative parenting combined with communal and cultural values in shaping children's moral and social development. Practically, the study suggests that community-based programs and social protection policies are needed to strengthen the capacity of single parents in raising resilient and well-rounded children.

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INTRODUCTION

The family is the first social institution and the closest environment that shapes a child's development from the earliest stages of life. Through the family, children learn social values, norms, and behaviors that prevail within society. The presence of both father and mother is believed to create balance between discipline and emotional support; the complementary roles of parents serve as a crucial foundation for holistic child development (Hurlock, 1999).

However, in contemporary social realities, not all children grow up in intact families. Divorce, death, and other factors that lead to the absence of one parent have given rise to the phenomenon of single-parent families, where the entire burden of responsibility falls on one parent. Facing the dual role of breadwinner and primary caregiver, single parents experience psychological, social, and economic pressures that demand extraordinary capacity in guiding, protecting, and meeting the needs of their children (Djamarah, 2019).

Parenting strategies adopted by single parents vary widely, depending on their social background, education, economic conditions, and life experiences. Baumrind (as cited in Yatim & Irwanto, 1991) classifies parenting styles into authoritarian, permissive, and democratic, each exerting different influences on children's development. In the context of education, parents serve as guardians, educators, and the first teachers (Salmia, 2019). The absence of a partner due to divorce or death compels single parents to perform both parental roles simultaneously (Layliyah, 2013).

Parenting without a partner demands a particularly vital role in raising children with love and moral-religious values so they may grow into individuals of character who contribute positively to society (Yusuf,

2019). A supportive family environment can accelerate children's development, although inadequate parenting conditions may hinder it.

Children's character—understood as a system of values and behavioral patterns—develops most intensively during early childhood (0–5 years), a critical “golden age.” Moral values such as integrity, responsibility, discipline, and independence are most effectively instilled through appropriate parenting practices (Hurlock, 1999; Miftahut Taubah, 2015). In single-parent families, the absence of balanced parenting can disrupt children's emotional and social development.

Recent studies have highlighted the role of single parents in shaping children's character. Arsanti and Nurzannah (2023) found that single parents significantly foster early childhood independence through daily routines such as waking up early, tidying beds, and maintaining personal hygiene—demonstrating the importance of motivational and habitual practices. Similarly, Arlianty et al. (2023) observed that democratic parenting by single mothers supports positive socio-emotional development such as confidence, empathy, and adherence to rules, whereas permissive parenting tends to foster aggression and low empathy. Research in Pekalongan also revealed that democratic parenting promotes psychomotor development, while authoritarian and permissive approaches correlate with emotional instability and aggressive behavior (Istiani et al., 2022). Quantitative findings from Makassar (2024) further emphasize that democratic parenting positively influences children's independence, responsibility, and discipline, whereas permissive and neglectful styles negatively affect character formation, particularly in relation to technology use. Additionally, the Family Stress Model (Conger et al., 1994) explains how economic stress impacts parental mental health, which subsequently influences parenting practices and children's well-being.

Despite the growing body of literature, most studies remain focused on children's character education in general or within urban contexts, with limited attention given to single-parent dynamics in local community settings such as Tembelok, Sandubaya District, Mataram City. This constitutes a research gap: very few empirical studies specifically explore how single-parenting practices shape children's character within the unique socio-cultural and economic contexts of local communities.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in Tembelok, where many households are managed by single parents, and preliminary observations reveal concerning patterns of child behavior—such as lack of respect, dishonesty, impoliteness, and low social empathy. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS NTB, 2022–2023) reinforce the urgency of this issue: divorce cases increased from 8,498 (NTB) and 480 (Mataram) in 2022 to 10,746 (NTB) and 623 (Mataram) in 2023; in Tembelok alone, approximately 200 families are headed by single parents. Initial surveys also reveal diverse parenting styles in the area, with consequences ranging from children who are overly shy and withdrawn to those exhibiting delinquent and disrespectful behaviors.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address the research gap by examining parenting practices among single parents and their implications for children's character development in Tembelok. It is guided by two central research questions: (1) How do single-parenting practices shape children's character in Tembelok? (2) What factors influence single parents' approaches to raising their children in this community? The study aims to identify parenting patterns and analyze the underlying factors—making it not only descriptive but also analytical, by exploring the social, economic, and cultural dynamics at play.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature on single-parenting and child character formation, enriching developmental and educational psychology discourses. Practically, it offers valuable insights for single parents in applying effective parenting strategies, supports children in cultivating positive behaviors, and provides an academic reference for future studies of parenting within distinct socio-cultural contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore single-parenting practices and their implications for children's character development in Tembelok neighborhood, Sandubaya District, Mataram City. Within this approach, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument responsible for data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The validity of the findings was ensured through triangulation techniques, which included observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2023).

The research site was purposively selected in Tembelok due to its relatively high number of single-parent families and the observable phenomena related to children's character development that warrant

closer examination. Fieldwork was conducted from April to June 2025, with a flexible duration until the data reached saturation.

The data sources were divided into two categories. Primary data were obtained from single parents, children, and community leaders relevant to the research focus, covering aspects such as parenting experiences, challenges faced, and strategies adopted. Secondary data were drawn from official documents, scholarly literature, and previous research, which served to strengthen the interpretation of field data (Haryoko et al., 2020).

Three main techniques were employed for data collection. Observation was conducted both openly and discreetly to capture social realities in the field, particularly the interactions between single parents and their children. Structured interviews were carried out to obtain systematic information about parenting styles, supporting and inhibiting factors, and their implications for character formation. The interview instrument consisted of a standardized set of questions prepared beforehand, ensuring consistency across all informants (Sugiyono, 2023). In addition, documentation—including written records, official documents, and photographs of research activities—was used to reinforce data validity.

Data credibility was ensured through source, technique, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing information across different informants; technique triangulation was carried out by cross-checking results from observations, interviews, and documentation; while time triangulation was implemented by repeating data collection at different periods to examine the consistency of information (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data were analyzed interactively following Miles and Huberman's model, which involves four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were reduced by selecting relevant information, which was then presented in narrative form to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were initially tentative but subsequently strengthened through iterative verification and consistency checks (Sugiyono, 2023).

Through this approach, the study aims to comprehensively reveal the dynamics of single-parenting practices and their implications for children's character development in Tembelok. The findings are expected not only to provide descriptive insights into the phenomenon but also to contribute theoretically to social science scholarship and practically to the formulation of policies and family-support programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is the central part of the article. It is where the author should explain in words what the author's discovered in the research. It should be laid out and in a logical sequence. The results of the study presented in this section result from a clean process of data analysis, such as statistical calculations and testing processes or other processes for the achievement of its research. State the findings of the study concisely. If the authors want to display a table, use the following format:

This study found that single-parenting practices in Tembelok have a significant influence on children's character development. According to demographic data from 2024, the neighborhood is inhabited by 1,934 residents, including 200 single parents. This figure is relatively high compared to surrounding areas, with the majority of single parents belonging to lower- to middle-income groups. Socioeconomic conditions thus represent one of the primary challenges in implementing ideal parenting practices. Most single parents must work from morning until evening to provide for their families, which limits the time available for direct interaction with their children, particularly in terms of academic support and emotional communication. Nevertheless, interviews revealed that parents make efforts to dedicate at least brief periods of time to offer attention, advice, and moral reinforcement to their children.

In addition to economic factors, the level of parental education was also found to affect parenting practices. Parents with limited formal education often struggle to assist their children in academic activities. For example, when children required help with homework, such parents were unable to provide optimal guidance. However, this did not deter them; many relied on the support of relatives, neighbors, or community members with higher levels of education. At the same time, parents consistently emphasized the importance of formal education as a means of social mobility and a tool to secure a better future for their

children. This demonstrates a shift in the role of single parents—from being merely providers to becoming moral guides and active motivators for their children’s educational journey.

Field observations and interviews indicated that the dominant parenting style in Tembelok is authoritative, characterized by a combination of firmness and warmth. Parents sought to instill fundamental values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, and religiosity. These values were reinforced through daily practices, including greeting others respectfully, using polite language, and showing deference to elders. Religious values were nurtured through activities such as communal prayers at home or in the mosque and the recitation of daily prayers. Parents also structured their children’s daily routines to balance learning, worship, and play, thereby embedding discipline into everyday life.

Beyond fostering individual character, single parents in Tembelok also directed their parenting efforts toward developing children’s social character. Children were encouraged to participate in community activities such as collective work (*gotong royong*), Qur’anic recitation gatherings (*yasinan*), and customary rituals. Participation in these collective practices reinforced values of solidarity, cooperation, and social belonging. Interactions with peers were used as opportunities to teach sharing, active listening, and avoidance of aggressive behavior. Empathy, social responsibility, and care for others were thus central to the values instilled. Parenting practices, therefore, not only nurtured children into morally upright individuals but also shaped them as socially adaptive and community-oriented members of society.

The study also highlighted the importance of social support from extended families and the wider community as a critical asset in childrearing. Many single parents entrusted their children to relatives or neighbors while they worked. Such support functioned as a social protection mechanism, reducing the risk of neglect and ensuring that children grew up in a safe environment. Community leaders affirmed that Tembelok residents are committed to creating a positive social climate to help children from single-parent families avoid negative peer influences. In this sense, social support can be regarded as social capital that strengthens family resilience amidst structural limitations.

Overall, single parents in Tembelok employed three main strategies in their parenting: role modeling, open communication, and the implementation of clear yet flexible rules. Role modeling was demonstrated through consistent behaviors such as honesty, hard work, and modesty. Open communication allowed children to feel heard and respected, while clear but flexible rules provided stable structure without stifling children’s independence.

Through these strategies, children from single-parent families in Tembelok were found to grow with strong character traits: honesty, politeness, discipline, religiosity, and high social concern. The findings reaffirm that despite economic limitations and the dual burden of responsibilities, single parents are still able to exercise consistent parenting practices. Non-nuclear family structures do not automatically constitute barriers to positive character development. On the contrary, adaptive strategies combined with adequate social support can enable single parents to nurture moral, social, and religious values deeply embedded in local cultural contexts.

Thus, the results of this study confirm the crucial role of single parents in shaping a resilient, morally grounded, and socially responsible younger generation, even when carried out under challenging circumstances (Sugiyono, 2023; Haryoko et al., 2020).

Single-Parenting Practices in Shaping Children’s Character in Tembelok

Etymologically, the term *pola* (pattern) refers to a specific way, method, or form used to achieve a particular goal, while *asuh* (to nurture) implies caring for, educating, guiding, assisting, and training children to become independent and empowered individuals. Terminologically, parenting can be understood as a set of strategies, methods, or best practices chosen and applied by parents in raising their children, reflecting their moral, social, and cultural responsibilities toward the child’s growth and development (Arjoni, 2017). Parenting is thus not limited to supervision but also encompasses reciprocal interactions between parents and children, including care, education, guidance, discipline, and protection. Such interactions form the

foundation for shaping children's behavior in line with moral values, social norms, and local cultural traditions (Fitriyani, 2015).

Findings from the field in Tembelok indicate that, in general, children raised by single parents demonstrate relatively positive character traits. Values such as politeness, honesty, discipline, and responsibility were embedded in their daily lives. For example, children habitually greeted teachers and elders, showed respect toward older individuals, valued their peers, and displayed friendliness in their social environment. These positive traits did not emerge instantly but rather developed through consistent habituation within the family, particularly from single parents who act as the primary moral educators.

At the developmental stage, good character plays a strategic role. It not only shapes a child's personality as an individual but also equips them to face educational challenges and social life in adulthood. Children with positive character tend to possess better adaptability, healthier communication skills, and stronger psychological resilience when confronted with life's complexities (Parke & Buriel, 2008).

Beyond the nuclear family, the social environment in Tembelok significantly contributes to children's character formation. A conducive environment, enriched by positive role models and collective values, accustoms children to healthy social interactions. Politeness, solidarity, and social responsibility were reinforced through their participation in community activities such as collective work (*gotong royong*), religious study gatherings (*pengajian*), and traditional ceremonies. Thus, character building was not confined to the domestic sphere but continuously reinforced through daily social interactions. This finding resonates with Darling and Steinberg (1993), who emphasized that parenting always interacts with social and cultural contexts, making community support a crucial factor in the success of children's character education.

The absence of a partner compels single parents to assume dual roles as both father and mother. This situation requires them to consistently instill moral values despite challenges posed by limited time, energy, and economic resources. Nevertheless, the awareness among single parents in Tembelok of the importance of character education motivates them to persistently model positive behaviors. Character formation from an early age is considered essential, as children's memory and learning capacity are relatively strong during childhood, making values more easily internalized (Bornstein, 2013).

In line with this, Barrick and Mount, as cited in Alkheilil (2016), argue that individuals with strong character traits are more likely to succeed in both professional and social domains. Core values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility form the foundation for positive behavior across various aspects of life. In other words, the ability of single parents to instill moral values from an early age impacts not only their children's present quality of life but also their long-term future.

Field findings further suggest that the dominant parenting style among single parents in Tembelok is authoritative, marked by a balance between firmness and warmth. Parents established clear rules while allowing open communication, enabling children to feel respected and valued. This aligns with Baumrind (1991), who argued that authoritative parenting is the most effective approach for raising independent, responsible, and academically as well as socially competent children. Furthermore, Pinquart's (2016) meta-analysis confirms that children raised under authoritative parenting styles tend to demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those raised under permissive or authoritarian styles.

In conclusion, children in Tembelok exhibit positive character development as a result of a combination of consistent family habituation, community support, and the authoritative parenting practices of single parents. Simple values, such as greeting others respectfully, honoring elders, appreciating younger peers, and helping others, serve as fundamental assets for navigating the wider world. Conversely, children deprived of such positive social habituation risk encountering difficulties in building social interactions, facing emotional isolation, and struggling to form healthy peer relationships. This phenomenon underscores that parenting is not merely a domestic practice but also a social strategy that directly influences the quality of future generations.

Factors Influencing Single-Parenting Practices toward Children in Tembelok, Sandubaya District

In carrying out their roles, single parents in Tembelok face multiple challenges that significantly influence the quality of their parenting practices. This complexity arises because they must simultaneously assume dual roles—as breadwinners and as the primary educators of their children—which is difficult to perform optimally without adequate social, economic, and educational support. Three key factors influencing parenting quality are economic, educational, and socio-environmental aspects, which interact dynamically in shaping the lives of single-parent families.

Economic Factors

Economic conditions constitute the most dominant constraint. The majority of single parents in Tembelok come from lower-middle socioeconomic groups, requiring them to work harder to meet basic needs. This financial burden limits the time available for parent-child interaction, weakens parental supervision, and increases children's susceptibility to external environmental influences. Conger et al. (1994) found that economic strain is correlated with an increase in coercive parenting practices and developmental problems in children.

Economic stress also elevates parental stress levels, particularly among single mothers, which negatively affects the quality of emotional relationships with their children (Choi & Jackson, 2011). Nevertheless, research in Indonesia has shown that many single parents continue to instill moral values such as hard work and honesty despite limited conditions (Arsanti & Nurzannah, 2023). This indicates that although economic hardship remains a major challenge, values and exemplary conduct can still be transmitted effectively.

Educational Factors

The educational background of parents determines their understanding of children's psychological needs and effective parenting strategies. Parents with lower educational attainment tend to adopt authoritarian approaches, whereas more educated parents are more likely to employ democratic parenting styles that allow open communication. Baumrind (2013) emphasized that authoritative parenting, which balances discipline and warmth, is the best predictor of positive child development, including in single-parent families.

International studies also confirm the crucial role of education in shaping parenting. For instance, Hosokawa and Katsura (2018) found that democratic parenting styles positively correlated with children's academic achievement in Japan. Similarly, an Indonesian study by Arlianty et al. (2023) showed that single mothers with greater educational awareness could better support their children's socio-emotional development, even under financial constraints. Thus, parental education not only enhances the effectiveness of parenting but also strengthens children's resilience against external pressures.

Social and Environmental Factors

Social support from extended families, neighbors, and local communities plays a crucial role in alleviating the burden of single parents. Such support may include childcare assistance, financial aid, and emotional encouragement. Bornstein (2019) highlighted that socio-cultural contexts are essential variables moderating parenting quality, especially in resource-limited families.

Conversely, the absence of social support makes single parents more vulnerable to emotional stress and feelings of isolation, ultimately weakening their relationship with their children (Istiani et al., 2022). Wang, Pomerantz, and Chen (2007) further emphasized that children's social interactions outside the family—particularly within communities—significantly contribute to self-regulation and healthy psychological functioning. Locally, Syamsidah et al. (2024) found that parenting patterns in millennial households are strongly shaped by the quality of socio-environmental support.

When examined more closely, economic, educational, and socio-environmental factors are deeply interconnected. Economic strain exacerbates parenting stress, which is further intensified by low educational levels. However, social support can serve as a protective factor that buffers these negative effects. This aligns

with the family stress model proposed by Conger et al. (1994), which underscores the complex interplay between economic, psychological, and social factors in determining parenting quality.

In conclusion, despite facing multifaceted challenges, single parents in Tembelok continue to strive to shape their children's character through role modeling, communication, and daily habituation. This finding is consistent with Baumrind (2013) and Simons and Conger (2007), who argued that regardless of family structure, parenting practices that balance affection and discipline remain key to nurturing children with strong character, resilience, and social awareness.

CONCLUSION

The study on The Influence of Single Parenting on Children's Character Development in Tembelok Neighborhood, Sandubaya District, Mataram City affirms that single parents play a significant role in shaping children's character, even when parenting is carried out under conditions of considerable limitation. The findings highlight that economic, educational, and socio-environmental factors are the primary determinants that interactively influence the quality of parenting.

Economic constraints emerge as the most dominant challenge. Most single parents come from lower-middle-income groups, requiring them to work intensively to meet basic household needs. This condition often reduces the time and quality of interaction with children, heightening the risk of less optimal parenting practices and affecting children's behavioral development. Nevertheless, limited economic resources do not entirely prevent single parents from instilling moral values such as discipline, honesty, and hard work through daily role modeling.

Educational background further strengthens or weakens parenting effectiveness. Parents with lower levels of education tend to struggle in assisting children's learning and addressing their psychological needs. Conversely, those with higher levels of education are better equipped to adopt democratic parenting styles that emphasize communication, dialogue, and mutual respect. This underscores that education functions not only as an individual asset but also as a social capital that enhances awareness of the importance of healthy parenting approaches.

Socio-environmental factors also serve as crucial supports. Extended family, neighbors, and community leaders provide meaningful assistance in reducing psychological burdens and the dual responsibilities faced by single parents. In contrast, the absence of such social support often leads to feelings of isolation and heightened stress, which in turn negatively affect the quality of parent-child emotional relationships. Social support thus functions as a protective buffer that helps maintain the stability of parenting under challenging circumstances.

In synthesis, these three factors are interrelated rather than isolated. Economic pressures intensify parental stress, low educational attainment weakens parenting effectiveness, while social support can act as a protective factor that mitigates adverse effects. Hence, despite structural and psychological challenges, single parents in Tembelok continue to play a fundamental role in fostering children's character to become disciplined, morally grounded, and socially responsible individuals.

The findings of this study carry practical implications: integrated interventions through family economic empowerment, enhancement of parental educational literacy, and the strengthening of community-based social networks are essential to reinforce single-parenting practices. With such support systems, children raised in single-parent households stand a greater chance of growing into resilient, independent, and positively characterized individuals amidst the complexities of modern life.

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