

The Relationship Between Permissive Parenting Styles and Students' Aggressive Behavior at SMA Negeri 2 Medan

Asiah *, Rohimi Sebayang

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the relationship between permissive parenting styles and students' aggressive behavior at SMA Negeri 2 Medan. A quantitative approach with a correlational research design was employed. The sample consisted of 70 eleventh-grade students selected using purposive sampling based on school counselors' records regarding aggressive behavior and parental parenting style characteristics. The research instruments included a permissive parenting questionnaire and an aggressive behavior questionnaire, each developed based on established theoretical indicators.

The results of hypothesis testing revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between permissive parenting and students' aggressive behavior, with a correlation coefficient of 0.435 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that higher levels of permissive parenting are associated with a greater tendency for students to exhibit aggressive behavior. The study recommends increased attention and targeted interventions by school counselors to identify and address students who come from permissive parenting backgrounds.

* Corresponding Author: rohimizebayang693@gmail.com

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Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood. During this period, individuals can no longer be categorized as children, yet they are not fully regarded as adults. Adolescents are in the process of searching for their identity and lifestyle, which they perceive as most suitable for themselves. This exploration is often carried out by experimenting with new experiences, which are frequently accompanied by various challenges. The behavioral problems that arise during this phase often generate concern and discomfort among people in their surroundings, including family members and peers at school.

Adolescent behavior is often driven by the pursuit of personal satisfaction without adequate consideration of its consequences or impact on others. One form of negative behavior that commonly emerges among adolescents is aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior manifests in various forms, ranging from physical violence to severe psychological pressure. It is characterized by hostility and actions intended to harm others. Individuals who display aggressive behavior tend to impose their will in social interactions without considering others' responses, emotions, or the potential consequences of their actions. Such behavior also involves an intention to injure or damage the targeted individual. Adolescents who exhibit aggressive behavior generally show limited empathy and a lack of concern for others' feelings.

One of the primary factors contributing to aggressive behavior in adolescents originates from the family environment, particularly inappropriate parenting practices. Appropriate parenting should support children's physical and psychological development and foster positive character formation and independence. Ideally, parents should provide a nurturing environment by monitoring their children's activities, setting clear boundaries without being overly restrictive, and allowing children to make decisions under parental supervision. This approach aims to ensure that children develop in accordance with social, moral, and religious norms. However, empirical realities indicate that inappropriate parenting practices often lead children to engage in serious misconduct, which ultimately harms both the child and others.

A recent incident reported in Surabaya illustrates this issue, where a parent responded impulsively to a conflict involving their child at school without verifying the facts. The parent reacted aggressively toward another student, resulting in legal consequences. This case demonstrates how inappropriate parenting practices can produce harmful outcomes for children,

parents, and the broader community.

Parenting styles characterized by excessive permissiveness are generally considered ineffective, particularly when parents allow children unrestricted freedom without establishing clear rules or educational demands. Such conditions can hinder children's ability to distinguish between right and wrong and may jeopardize their future development. Consistent with Khabib (2019), one of the factors influencing aggressive behavior is direct parental influence, especially permissive parenting practices within the family environment.

The tendency toward aggressive behavior is often driven by the desire for immediate gratification, which plays a crucial role in the development of aggression (Hasballah, 2003). According to Anantasari (2006), the consequences of aggressive behavior may include physical injury as well as non-physical harm, such as verbal aggression involving harsh and hurtful language. Other non-physical forms of aggression include intimidation, coercion, and social exclusion.

Rita (2017) defines aggressive behavior as emotional impulses characterized by anger or hostility that are expressed through actions intended to harm others. These actions may be manifested through physical violence, verbal abuse, or threatening facial expressions and body language. Examples of physical aggression include hitting or attacking others, whereas verbal aggression may involve insults or degrading remarks.

Aggressive behavior among students appears to persist over time and is often perceived as a "tradition" passed down from senior students to younger generations. This phenomenon has the potential to transform schools—ideally safe and positive learning environments—into places that are uncomfortable and unsafe for adolescents.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the negative impact of permissive parenting on aggressive behavior. Astuti (as cited in Aditia et al., 2018) reported that among 52 children raised under permissive parenting, 49 exhibited aggressive tendencies. Similarly, Ririn (2011) found that 46 out of 49 children exposed to permissive parenting frequently demonstrated aggressive behavior. Permissive parenting tends to impair children's ability to regulate aggressive impulses because they are not accustomed to following rules from an early age. Parents who feel incapable of controlling their children's deviant behavior often choose to tolerate or ignore such behavior.

Hastuti (2015), as cited in Sella et al. (2020), further confirmed that permissive parenting has a highly significant positive effect on students' aggressive behavior. In other words, higher levels of permissive parenting are associated with a greater likelihood of aggressive behavior among students.

Field observations conducted by the researcher on November 12, 2024, revealed several incidents of aggressive behavior among students. One case involved a male student physically assaulting a female student following the termination of their relationship. The incident resulted in physical injury and property damage and required intervention by the school counselor. During mediation, the student displayed emotional instability and demanded to transfer schools. The student's parent later disclosed that the child had been consistently indulged since junior high school, with minimal supervision or guidance.

In another case, a student threatened a classroom teacher after being instructed to store a mobile phone, using verbal threats that caused significant concern. When the student's parents were summoned, they admitted to consistently complying with the child's demands, which reinforced the student's uncontrolled behavior. A separate incident involved a male student deliberately obstructing a teacher, causing the teacher to fall.

These cases align with Surbakti's (2009) assertion that permissive parenting tends to have negative consequences for adolescents. Children raised under permissive parenting often act impulsively, exhibit weak self-control, demonstrate low awareness of consequences, adopt unrestricted lifestyles, impose their will on others, and struggle to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that aggressive behavior constitutes a harmful and undesirable pattern of conduct. When parents fail to implement appropriate parenting practices, adolescents are more likely to exhibit aggressive tendencies. One parenting style that significantly contributes to the emergence of aggressive behavior is permissive parenting.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design aimed at examining the extent of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The research was classified as ex post facto research, as the variables were examined without experimental manipulation. Data collection was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires measuring permissive parenting styles. Students who demonstrated a high tendency toward permissive parenting based on the questionnaire results were subsequently administered a follow-up questionnaire focusing on aggressive behavior. The collected data were then analyzed to determine whether students raised under permissive parenting exhibited tendencies toward aggressive behavior.

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Medan, located at Jalan Karang Sari No. 435, Sari Rejo, Medan Polonia District, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The research was carried out over a two-month period during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, from March to April 2025. The population of this study comprised all eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Medan in the 2024/2025 academic year, consisting of 12 classes. The sample included 70 students drawn from two classes.

Data analysis was performed using Pearson's Product–Moment correlation analysis to test the proposed hypothesis, with the assistance of SPSS software. The analysis aimed to examine the relationship between permissive parenting styles and aggressive behavior among students. Prior to hypothesis testing using the Product–Moment correlation formula, prerequisite tests were conducted, including tests of normality and linearity. Following the fulfillment of these assumptions, hypothesis testing was carried out to determine the significance of the relationship between the variables.

Result and Discussion

Results

Based on the data presented in the table, the permissive parenting variable generally falls within the moderate category. This is indicated by the majority of respondents, accounting for 69% (48 out of 70 participants), who were classified in this category. Meanwhile, 23% of respondents (16 students) were categorized as having low levels of permissive parenting. On the other hand, 8% of respondents (6 students) were classified in the high category. Overall, this distribution illustrates that students' experiences of permissive parenting vary, with a predominance in the moderate category.

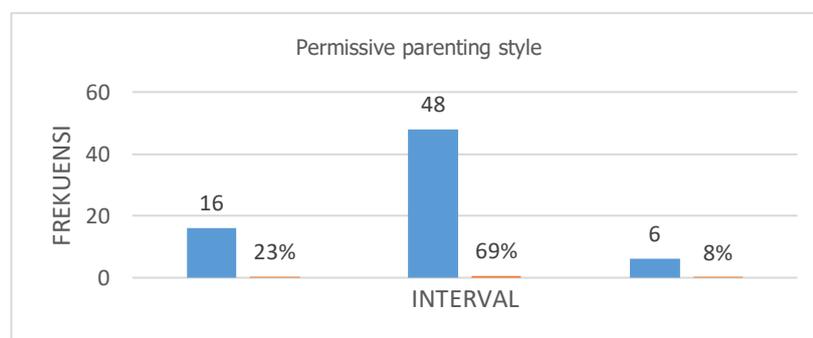


Figure 1. Bar Chart of the Frequency Distribution of the Permissive Parenting Variable

Based on the data presented in the table, the permissive parenting variable generally falls within the moderate category. This is evidenced by the majority of respondents, accounting for 69% (48 out of 70 participants), who were classified in this category. Meanwhile, 23% of respondents (16 students) were categorized as having low levels of permissive parenting. In contrast, 8% of respondents (6 students) were classified in the high category. Overall, this distribution illustrates variability in students' experiences of permissive parenting, with a predominance in the moderate category.

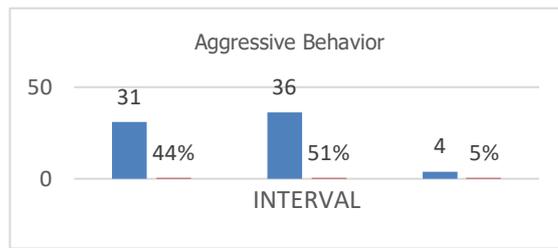


Figure 2. Bar Chart of the Frequency Distribution of Aggressive Behavior

Based on the data presented in the table, the aggressive behavior variable generally falls within the moderate category. This is indicated by 51% of respondents (36 students) classified in this category. In addition, 5% of respondents (4 students) were categorized as having high levels of aggressive behavior, while 44% of respondents (31 students) fell into the low category. Overall, this frequency distribution illustrates the pattern of students’ aggressive behavior tendencies.

Subsequently, a correlation test was conducted on the two variables to examine the relationship between them, as presented in the figure below.

Table 1. Correlation Test Results

		Correlations	
		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.435
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Y	Pearson Correlation	.435	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

Based on the data analysis, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained. This value is below the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between the permissive parenting variable (X) and aggressive behavior (Y). Therefore, the relationship between the two variables did not occur by chance and warrants further consideration.

Further analysis revealed that the correlation coefficient (r) between permissive parenting and aggressive behavior was 0.435. The positive value of this coefficient indicates a positive relationship, meaning that higher levels of permissive parenting are associated with a greater tendency toward aggressive behavior.

Considering the magnitude of the correlation coefficient, it can be concluded that there is a moderately positive relationship between permissive parenting and aggressive behavior. In other words, the higher the level of permissive parenting experienced by students, the greater their tendency to exhibit aggressive behavior. Conversely, lower levels of permissive parenting are associated with a lower tendency toward aggressive behavior.

Discussion

The results of the tendency analysis in this study provide an overview of the dominance level of permissive parenting experienced by students and the tendency of aggressive behavior they exhibit. This analysis was conducted by classifying respondents’ total scores into three categories—high, moderate, and low—for both the permissive parenting variable and the aggressive behavior variable. The purpose of this analysis was to examine the extent to which permissive parenting is present in students’ lives and how this pattern relates to aggressive behavior displayed in the school environment.

Regarding the permissive parenting variable, the findings indicate that most students experienced this parenting style at a moderate level, with 48 out of 70 students (approximately 69%) falling into this category. Meanwhile, 16 students (23%) were classified in the low category, and only 6 students (8%) were categorized as high. These findings suggest that most parents do not strictly enforce rules, yet they also do not grant unrestricted freedom. In other words, parents tend to adopt a middle position in parenting practices, allowing a degree of autonomy while maintaining certain boundaries, although control and guidance remain relatively loose.

Permissive parenting in this study was examined through four aspects: limited parental control, neglect of decision-making guidance, parental indifference, and freedom-oriented educational practices. Descriptive analysis showed that all aspects of permissive parenting fell within the moderate category, with limited parental control at 60%, neglect of decision-making at 64%, parental indifference at 60%, and freedom-oriented education at 59%.

Meanwhile, the tendency analysis of aggressive behavior revealed that 36 students (51%) were classified in the moderate category, 31 students (44%) in the low category, and only 4 students (5%) in the high category. These results indicate that most students exhibit aggressive behavior at a level that may still be considered manageable, although it remains potentially disruptive if not addressed appropriately. Nevertheless, the presence of students in the high category warrants particular attention from teachers, parents, and school counselors.

Further descriptive analysis showed that most aspects of aggressive behavior were also categorized as moderate. However, one aspect—antisocial aggression—was classified as high (48%), while physical aggression (40%), verbal aggression (64%), and emotional aggression (39%) were categorized as moderate. This suggests that although aggressive behavior is generally moderate, certain manifestations, particularly antisocial tendencies, require focused intervention.

When comparing the tendency analysis results of both variables, a parallel pattern emerges, with both permissive parenting and aggressive behavior predominantly falling within the moderate category. This finding supports the assumption that a moderate level of permissive parenting is associated with a moderate level of aggressive behavior. In other words, when parents provide relatively loose supervision without firm boundaries, students may not immediately exhibit severe aggression but may still display certain forms of aggressive behavior, particularly verbal or emotional aggression.

These findings are consistent with the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, which revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between permissive parenting and aggressive behavior, with a correlation coefficient of 0.435 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that higher levels of permissive parenting are associated with a greater likelihood of aggressive behavior among students. Thus, the tendency analysis not only illustrates the dominance level of each variable but also reinforces the interpretation of the relationship between parenting practices and students' behavior in educational settings.

Overall, the findings indicate that most eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Medan fall into the moderate category for both permissive parenting and aggressive behavior. This suggests that students are generally raised with a moderate degree of freedom—neither under strict supervision nor complete neglect. This condition aligns with Hurlock's (2015) theory, which characterizes permissive parenting by limited control, neglect of decision-making guidance, and parental indifference, resulting in extensive freedom for children to act independently.

Such parenting conditions contribute to the emergence of aggressive behavior at a moderate level. According to Rita (2017), aggressive behavior includes physical and verbal actions, as well as facial expressions and body language that demean or intimidate others. In this study, aggressive behavior manifested in four forms: physical aggression, verbal aggression, emotional aggression, and antisocial aggression, consistent with the framework proposed by Kruglanski and Higgins (2007).

These findings suggest that adolescents raised under permissive parenting are less likely to receive adequate guidance in emotional regulation, making them more prone to aggressive behavior in social interactions. Furthermore, the significant positive correlation between permissive parenting and aggressive behavior supports Hastuti's (2015) assertion that permissive parenting has a strong influence on aggressive tendencies. The higher the level of permissiveness applied by parents, the greater the likelihood that adolescents will exhibit aggressive behavior. This conclusion is further reinforced by studies conducted by Astuti (2017) and Ririn (2011), which found that children raised in permissive environments often lack behavioral boundaries, increasing their susceptibility to aggression.

From a developmental psychology perspective, aggressive behavior during adolescence may also stem from difficulties in distinguishing between positive and negative behaviors during this transitional phase. Lutfiana et al. (2018) emphasized that emotional instability during adolescence makes individuals more prone to aggressive actions if they are not guided appropriately by their environment, particularly by parents.

Permissive parenting characterized by minimal supervision and control increases adolescents'

vulnerability to aggressive impulses. Overall, the results of this study are consistent with the theoretical framework presented in the literature. Permissive parenting, marked by low levels of control and demands, provides adolescents with extensive freedom of expression. When this freedom is not balanced with adequate emotional guidance, it may trigger aggressive behavior. Therefore, it is essential for parents to recognize their role in shaping children's character and behavior by adopting appropriate and balanced parenting practices.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Medan, it can be concluded that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between permissive parenting and students' aggressive behavior. The tendency analysis indicates that most students fall into the moderate category for both variables, suggesting that students generally experience parenting characterized by considerable freedom with minimal supervision and exhibit aggressive behavior at a moderate level.

Permissive parenting practices adopted by parents—whether due to occupational demands, limited parental knowledge, or intergenerational parenting patterns—contribute to the emergence of aggressive behavior in children. The findings demonstrate that higher levels of permissive parenting are associated with a greater tendency for students to display aggressive behavior, including physical, verbal, emotional, and antisocial aggression. These results are consistent with theories of developmental psychology and education, which emphasize the importance of parental control and guidance in preventing maladaptive behavior.

Therefore, this study underscores the significant influence of family parenting practices on the development of students' attitudes and behaviors in school settings. Imbalanced parenting styles may create psychological conditions that encourage students to express themselves negatively, including through aggressive actions toward others or their environment.

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