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Analysis of Democratic Parenting Styles Related to CRE Learning Motivation in High School Students

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between democratic parenting and Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning motivation in high school students, which is motivated by low learning motivation and suboptimal family support in fostering spiritual learning enthusiasm. Using a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach, this study examines various relevant literature to understand the relationship between parenting styles and learning motivation. The results show that democratic parenting styles that balance affection, discipline, and open communication play an important role in building students' intrinsic and spiritual motivation. In the context of CRE, this parenting style creates a learning environment conducive to the growth of faith, responsibility, and Christian character. This study contributes theoretically to Christian education studies and offers practical guidance for parents and CRE teachers in shaping a generation that is steadfast in faith and highly motivated.

Keywords: Democratic Parenting Style, Learning Motivation, Christian Religious Education, Family, High School Students

INTRODUCTION

This research is also motivated by the author's personal experience of not living directly with his parents since childhood, but rather moving from one family member to another. This condition meant that the author did not personally experience democratic parenting in his daily life. However, it was precisely through this life experience that the author had the opportunity to see and experience various types of parenting styles applied by each family. Each environment in which the author grew up provided a different flavor in terms of education, parenting, and instilling values of discipline and responsibility.

Through these observations, the author realized that parenting styles have a significant influence on children's attitudes, enthusiasm for learning, and character formation. This experience fostered the author's sensitivity and interest in researching more deeply the importance of democratic parenting in shaping children's motivation to learn, especially in the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE). The author believes that this journey of life is not merely a coincidence, but part of God's plan to foster a deeper understanding of the meaning of love, responsibility, and faith education in Christian families. With this reflection, this study is expected to contribute to the development of Christian-based parenting theory and practice in supporting student learning motivation (Junihot, 2016).

Christian Religious Education (CRE) in schools has an important function in shaping students' faith and character, but in practice, there are many indications that student achievement and engagement in this subject are not yet optimal. Based on various field studies and action research, one of the "main" problems that is evident is the decline in student motivation to learn CRE, as indicated by low participation in class, lack of interest in participating in school spiritual activities, and decreased involvement in religious learning activities. Intervention and observational studies in a number of schools found that the application of certain learning methods (e.g., discussion groups, question and answer sessions) can increase motivation, but many schools still report low activity rates, especially after the pandemic.

The second problem relates to variations in parenting styles and practices that

impact children's motivation development. Developmental psychology literature and research in Indonesia show that parenting styles play an important role in shaping children's attitudes, independence, and discipline, which are factors that underlie learning motivation. Several local studies have found a significant relationship between parenting styles (including the dimensions of responsiveness and demands that characterize democratic parenting) and children's behavior and achievement in school. However, not all families implement parenting practices that support learning; there are still patterns that tend to be permissive or authoritarian, which do not support the internalization of learning responsibilities (Anjani et al, 2024).

The third issue that is the direct focus of this study is the misalignment of parental support for the specific needs of CRE learning, namely the gap between the form of family support (generally general or academic in nature) and the specific needs of religious learning that require a spiritual context, examples of faith, and the cultivation of values at home. Research on parental involvement in religious learning (both studies on PAI and studies related to CRE/PAI in schools) confirms that structured involvement, e.g., assistance in reading spiritual materials, discussions of values at home, and spiritual role models provided by parents, contributes significantly to the development of students' character and religious motivation. However, several field studies show a lack of this form of involvement: parents are busy with economic demands or do not yet understand how to effectively accompany religious learning, so the support provided is not "suitable" for fostering motivation to learn CRE (Harahap, 2024).

Based on the three issues above (1) low motivation to learn CRE, (2) variations in parenting styles that do not always support learning development, and (3) inconsistency in parental support for religious learning needs, it is necessary to conduct a more focused study on how democratic parenting styles contribute (or not) to CRE learning motivation among high school students (Baumrind, 1966). A systematic literature review will help formulate practical recommendations for parents and CRE teachers to improve the most effective forms of family support in the context of shaping students' faith and learning motivation. Additionally, an approach that combines developmental theory (parenting) with the CRE pedagogical context provides a strong foundation for contextually relevant educational interventions (Sidjabat, 2019).

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach. A qualitative approach is used because this study focuses on a deep understanding of the relationship between democratic parenting and Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning motivation in high school students, rather than on numerical measurements or statistics. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena by emphasizing the meaning and interpretation of data found in a natural context. In this context, library research was conducted by examining various written sources such as books, scientific journals, previous research results, and official documents relevant to the research variables. This method was chosen because it is able to explore concepts, theories, and previous research results to be critically analyzed and linked to the focus of the research.

This research was conducted in digital libraries and academic repositories that provide open scientific sources, such as Google Scholar, Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital), and university e-journal portals in Indonesia. The research was conducted from September to December 2025, with time allocated for literature collection, data analysis, and research results compilation. Due to the nature of this research as a literature study, the activities were not carried out in specific field locations but focused on the analysis of relevant literature sources.

The population in this study includes all literature related to democratic parenting, learning motivation, and Christian Religious Education (CRE), in the form of books, scientific articles, and previous research results. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of data sources based on their relevance and depth of discussion of the research topic. Using this technique, the researcher only selected literature that met the following criteria: (1) discussed theories or research results on democratic parenting, (2) contained studies on learning motivation in the context of education, and (3) was related to Christian Religious Education.

According to Sugiyono (2019), in qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument because they play a direct role in the entire research process. In addition, the researcher also used a literature analysis sheet, which is a summary table that records important information from each source (title, author, year, main findings, and relevance to the research). Thus, the analysis can be carried out systematically and in an organized manner.

The data collection technique was carried out through a literature review with the following steps: First, searching for sources through online databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and university e-journals. Second, selecting literature relevant to the research variables. Third, reading, reviewing, and extracting conceptual or empirical data related to democratic parenting and motivation to learn CRE. Finally, recording the findings in an analysis sheet to facilitate the data synthesis process. According to Bungin (2020), data collection in literature studies focuses on reading and reviewing credible scientific sources to build a theoretical framework and gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data analysis technique in this study was conducted using content analysis, which is an analytical method that aims to identify, interpret, and synthesize meanings from various literature sources. The analysis stages include data reduction (selecting and simplifying important information), presenting data in descriptive form, and drawing conclusions. The qualitative data analysis process includes three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. With this approach, researchers seek to find patterns of relationship between democratic parenting theory and CRE learning motivation, as well as interpret their meaning in the context of Christian education.

This research plays an important role in providing direction and a foundation for the research process. The purpose of research is to explain, describe, and understand a phenomenon scientifically through a systematic approach.

This study has several main objectives. First, to describe in depth various aspects included in democratic parenting. Second, this study aims to describe various factors related to Christian Religious Education learning motivation in high school students, both from psychological and spiritual aspects, as well as the learning environment at home and school. Third, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the relationship between democratic parenting patterns and motivation to learn Christian Religious Education among high school students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parenting styles are generally classified into three types: authoritarian, permissive, and democratic. The authoritarian pattern is characterized by high demands and control without much response or warmth from parents, while the permissive pattern is characterized by the opposite, few demands but a lot of warmth and giving children a lot of freedom, resulting in less control over children's behavior. The book *Child and Adolescent Developmental Psychology: Theory, Parenting Styles, and Environment* explains that the democratic parenting style is an approach that combines proportional demands with parental responsiveness, allowing children to feel love and support, in addition to clear rules and responsibility for their choices (Silviana et al, 2023). Of the three, the democratic style is often considered the most effective because it encourages the development of self-control and intrinsic motivation to learn, rather than motivation due to external pressure or fear of punishment. Findings in the book *Independent Children, Happy Parents* show that children raised in families with a democratic parenting style tend to be more independent, confident, and have a higher motivation to learn compared to those raised with a more authoritarian or permissive parenting style (Agustini, 2024).

Democratic Parenting Style

Etymologically, the term *parenting style* comes from the word "style," which means a system, method, or fixed form, and "parenting," which means educating, caring for, and guiding (MPPB, 2024). Thus, parenting style can be interpreted as the way parents educate and guide their children toward maturity, both morally, spiritually, and socially. Democratic parenting is an approach that emphasizes a balance between children's freedom and responsibility. Parents give their children the opportunity to express their opinions, but still enforce clear rules and boundaries (Sidjabat, 2019).

According to Diana Baumrind (1966), democratic parenting or *authoritative parenting* is characterized by a combination of emotional warmth and directed control. Parents give children the freedom to express themselves and make decisions according to their stage of development, but still demand responsibility for those choices. John W. Santrock (2014) also explains that democratic parents are those who are warm, loving, but have high expectations for their children. This means that warmth and supervision are not two conflicting things, but complement each other in shaping children's independence and character.

In line with Elizabeth B. Hurlock (2017) in *Developmental Psychology* emphasizes that democratic parenting creates a safe emotional learning environment and encourages

children to actively participate in family decision-making. This pattern fosters self-confidence, empathy, and good self-control because children are accustomed to being invited to discuss and have their opinions valued. This is also reinforced by B. S. Sidjabat (2019) in his book *Raising Children Creatively*, which highlights the importance of love, discipline, and open communication in Christian parenting. Sidjabat emphasizes that healthy parenting is parenting that combines moral firmness with educational love, as exemplified by Christ in shaping children's character.

In the context of Christian families, democratic parenting is in line with biblical principles that emphasize love and discipline. Christian parents are called to "bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4), which psychologically means instilling values through loving relationships, open communication, and responsibility cultivated through example. Thus, democratic parenting not only shapes discipline and responsibility, but also becomes a vessel for the growth of children's faith in their daily lives.

In terms of its influence on child development, various studies show that democratic parenting contributes positively to independence, discipline, and responsibility. Children from democratic families are generally more independent, have the ability to make decisions, and show resilience in facing academic and social tasks (Santrock, 2023). Empirical research also shows that democratic parenting correlates positively with learning motivation, because children feel valued, supported, and have room to develop according to their potential (Baumrind, 1966).

Several studies in Indonesia reinforce these findings. For example, research by Dewi and Sukmawarti (2022) in *the Pahlawan University Journal* found that students with democratic parenting showed higher learning motivation compared to students who were raised in an authoritarian or permissive manner. Similar results were also reported by Basompe & Soetjningsih (2023), who found a significant relationship between democratic parenting and learning motivation in high school students, particularly in the context of Christian Religious Education. These findings confirm that democratic parenting not only influences social behavior but also has a direct impact on students' enthusiasm and involvement in the learning process.

Thus, democratic parenting can be understood as a form of parenting that balances love, communication, and firmness. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), this pattern plays an important role because it is able to foster character, independence, and moral responsibility in children as a tangible manifestation of faith working in love.

Learning Motivation

Etymologically, the term motivation comes from the Latin word *movere*, which means "to move" or "the urge to move." In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), motivation is defined as an urge that arises within a person to perform an action in order to achieve a certain goal (BPPB, 2024). Thus, learning motivation can be understood as the driving force that motivates individuals to behave in the learning process in order to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

According to Sardiman (2018), learning motivation is the totality of the driving forces within students that generate enthusiasm for learning, ensure the continuity of learning

activities, and provide direction for learning activities so that learning objectives can be achieved. In the context of Christian educational psychology, learning motivation is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also towards growth in faith and character. Christian education places motivation as a spiritual drive that arises from the awareness of God's calling to grow in wisdom and knowledge. This is in line with B. S. Sidjabat's (2019) view, which emphasizes that the learning process is not only an intellectual activity but also an act of faith directed toward knowing God and developing the potential He has given.

In educational psychology, learning motivation is divided into two main types, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a drive that comes from within the student, such as curiosity, interest in the subject, or personal satisfaction when successfully understanding a concept (Santrock, 2014). Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation arises due to influences from outside the individual, such as rewards, praise, grades, or encouragement from parents and teachers (Mulyasa, 2005). In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), these two types of motivation can coexist: intrinsic motivation arises from a personal desire to know God more deeply through His word, while extrinsic motivation can be triggered by the support of teachers and a spiritual learning environment.

John W. Santrock (2023) explains that students with intrinsic motivation are more likely to enjoy the learning process, persevere in the face of difficulties, and demonstrate more stable academic performance. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation can help initiate the learning process, but it does not always guarantee continued enthusiasm for learning if the external encouragement disappears. Therefore, teachers and parents need to foster intrinsic motivation as the basis for continuous learning.

High school students' learning motivation is influenced by various internal and external factors. Internal factors include interest, personal goals, self-efficacy, and the student's psychological condition. Meanwhile, external factors include the family environment, teaching methods, and the learning atmosphere at school (Hurlock, 1997). Parental parenting styles, especially democratic ones, also play an important role in shaping learning motivation. Children who grow up in democratic families usually have a higher sense of responsibility and independence because they are accustomed to being heard and having their opinions valued, so they have an intrinsic drive to learn (Sidjabat, 2019).

From a Christian educational perspective, learning motivation is also supported by spirituality, namely the awareness that learning is part of the call of faith. Christian teachers and parents act as partners in building learning motivation rooted in the values of love, honesty, and responsibility, as taught in Colossians 3:23, Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Learning motivation is closely related to students' academic success, including in Christian Religious Education (CRE) subjects. Students with high motivation tend to have perseverance, great interest, and the ability to overcome difficulties in learning CRE. Conversely, students with low motivation often find it difficult to deeply understand the meaning of Christian faith learning.

The results of research conducted by L. Dewi and Sukmawarti (2022) show that

high learning motivation has a positive effect on student learning outcomes in various subjects, including Christian Religious Education. The study emphasizes the importance of internal factors (intrinsic motivation) and external factors (family support) in determining academic success. Similar findings were reported by Basompe & Soetjningsih (2023), who showed that democratic parental support and open communication can increase students' spiritual motivation and learning achievement Kristen in secondary school.

Thus, learning motivation in the context of Christian Religious Education is not merely a drive to achieve high grades, but a manifestation of active faith, a faith that encourages students to know God through the learning process. Therefore, building learning motivation also means shaping spiritual maturity and true Christian character. Within the framework of Christian educational psychology, as explained by Junihot S (2016), learning motivation has a spiritual dimension that guides individuals to know God through the process of faith education.

Christian Religious Education (CRE)

According to B. S. Sidjabat (2000), CRE is "a conscious and planned effort to guide students to grow in faith, character, and responsibility as Christ-." CRE is an integral part of education that serves to shape mature Christians in faith who are able to bring Gospel values to society. CRE plays a central role in shaping the faith and moral character of students in school. Based on Permendikbud Number 12 of 2016 concerning Competency Standards for Primary and Secondary Education Graduates, the main objective of religious education in schools is to develop students' abilities to become people who are faithful, devoted to God Almighty Esa, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Thus, CRE does not only focus on cognitive aspects or mastery of biblical knowledge, but also on the formation of spiritual character that is evident in daily actions.

In the context of national education, CRE in schools aims to guide Christian students to understand the truth of God's word, live out the love of Christ, and apply Gospel values in social life. This is in line with B. S. Sidjabat's (2019) statement emphasizing that Christian education aims to foster a living faith and Christian character rooted in God's love. Religious education should not stop at memorizing doctrine, but should encourage students to experience a personal encounter with God through a dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning process.

Religious education teachers serve not only as teachers but also as *role models* of faith for students. Sidjabat (2000) explains that a Christian teacher must teach with heart, with a spirit of service, and with the awareness that their task is part of a spiritual calling. Religious education teachers have a responsibility to bring Christ's love into the teaching and learning process, so that students not only receive knowledge but also experience growth in faith.

Christian teachers act as spiritual facilitators who help students integrate the values of faith into their daily lives. Thus, the success of CRE is not only measured by students' academic abilities, but also by the moral and spiritual transformation that occurs within them. In the context of learning motivation, CRE teachers must be able to foster a spirit of learning

with a loving approach, build two-way communication, and provide space for students to ask questions and reflect. This approach creates a learning atmosphere that supports intrinsic motivation, a drive to learn that comes from within the student because of their awareness of faith, not merely because of grades (Santrock, 2014).

Christian Religious Education has a function that is closely related to the character building of students. Values such as love, honesty, responsibility, discipline, and cooperation become the moral foundation instilled through CRE. True Christian education is rooted in the understanding that every child is created in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*), so that the task of education is to help children restore that image of themselves in the light of Christ. Therefore, CRE not only teaches universal morality, but also instills Christian spirituality that focuses on relationships with God and others.

These values form the basis for shaping students' character to be people of integrity who are resilient in the face of the challenges of the times. In the context of modern education, CRE learning that instills values of love and responsibility also plays a role in fostering students' motivation to learn. When students feel that learning activities have spiritual and moral meaning, they are more motivated to study diligently (Mulyasa, 2005). Oleh Therefore, CRE functions not only as a means of transferring knowledge of faith, but also as a vehicle for personal transformation towards true spiritual and moral maturity.

Thus, Christian Religious Education in schools cannot be viewed merely as a subject, but as a vehicle for the formation of whole human beings who are faithful, have character, and are motivated to continue learning in the light of Christ's love.

The Relationship Between Democratic Parenting and Motivation to Learn CRE in High School Students

The relationship between democratic parenting and learning motivation in Christian Religious Education (CRE) is an important topic in educational studies oriented towards character building and student spirituality. Democratic parenting, characterized by love, open communication, and consistent discipline, has a direct influence on how children develop their attitude toward the learning process (Baumrind, 1966). Children who grow up in a democratic family environment tend to have strong self-confidence, dare to express their opinions, and have a sense of responsibility for their tasks, including in CRE learning activities.

Theoretically, this connection can be explained through the perspectives of educational psychology and Christian theology. In developmental psychology, as explained by John W. Santrock (2014), a family environment that provides emotional support and guided autonomy can increase children's intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Hurlock (2017) states that when children feel valued and trusted by their parents, they will develop an internal drive to achieve their learning goals. In the context of CRE, this drive is not only academic but also spiritual; children feel called to learn not because of obligation but because of a personal longing to know God and understand His word (Junihot, 2016).

B. S. Sidjabat (2019) in *Raising Children Creatively* emphasizes that democratic parenting is a concrete manifestation of educational love. Parents who apply the principles of love and responsibility emulate God's relationship with humans, which is full of freedom but

based on truth. Through such parenting, children learn to understand the values of discipline and love in a balanced way, which is then internalized as spiritual motivation in learning. Sidjabat (2000) adds that the emotional and spiritual support of parents is "fertile ground for children's faith and enthusiasm for learning to grow in the light of Christ."

From a theological perspective, this relationship can also be understood through the principle of *imago Dei*, that every child is created in the image of God and has the potential to grow into a person who glorifies Him. When parents respect their children's freedom and guide them with love, they are emulating the love of Christ, who gives humans space to grow through responsibility and grace. In this framework, democratic parenting reflects God's love, which teaches obedience not through coercion but through loving relationships.

Empirical research supports this view. Research by Dewi and Sukmawarti (2022) found that students with democratic parenting showed higher levels of learning motivation compared to students who were raised authoritatively. Similarly, research by Basompe and Soetjningsih (2023) shows a positive relationship between democratic parenting and Christian Religious Education learning motivation among high school students in Poso. These research results show that open communication and emotional support from parents play a major role in shaping Christian students' enthusiasm for learning and perseverance in understanding the values of faith.

A synthesis of various theories and studies shows that democratic parenting has a significant influence on learning motivation, both psychologically and spiritually. Psychologically, loving and dialogical parenting fosters students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Spiritually, the values of love, discipline, and responsibility instilled by parents help students understand the meaning of learning as a calling of faith.

A conceptual model that can be formulated from this relationship is that democratic parenting (variable one) acts as a factor in shaping a supportive and inspiring learning environment, while CRE learning motivation (variable two) is the result of the internalization of values, love, and responsibility that occurs through family and school interactions. These two variables interact in a reciprocal cycle: positive parenting increases learning motivation, and high motivation strengthens the parent-child relationship in a spiritual context. In the context of Christian Education, this relationship shows that educational love is the basis of all faith learning processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the results of this study contribute to the development of Christian education and educational psychology, particularly in expanding the understanding of the relationship between parenting styles and student learning motivation in the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE). This study reinforces theories that emphasize the central role of the family in shaping children's character, motivation, and learning behaviour (Mulyasa, 2022). This research is also expected to serve as a reference for future researchers interested in developing studies on the role of democratic parenting on religious motivation, as well as adding to the literature that highlights the relationship between the family environment and the religious education of high school students.

Meanwhile, in practical terms, this research provides direct benefits to various parties involved in education. For parents, the results of this study serve as a guideline for understanding the importance of applying democratic parenting that balances affection, open communication, and responsibility so that children are motivated to learn. For CRE teachers, this research provides new insights into the importance of family support in shaping students' enthusiasm for learning, so that teachers can adjust their teaching strategies to be more relevant to the emotional and spiritual needs of students. For schools, the results of this study can be used as a basis for designing cooperation between parents and educators to create a harmonious learning climate. Finally, for the Christian community, this study emphasizes the importance of synergy between family education and school education to nurture a generation that is faithful, has good character, and is highly motivated to learn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of theoretical studies and literature analysis, it can be concluded that democratic parenting has a significant influence on fostering motivation to learn Christian Religious Education (CRE) in high school students. A parenting style that combines affection, discipline, and open communication has been proven to be able to shape intrinsic motivation and strong faith in children. In the context of Christian education, this parenting style is an important means of instilling the values of love, responsibility, and honesty as taught by Christ. A supportive, communicative, and loving family environment also strengthens students' enthusiasm for learning and spiritual commitment at school. This study is expected to serve as a reference for parents, teachers, and Christian educational institutions in creating a learning ecosystem centered on love and character building, so that a young generation with strong faith, strong character, and learning motivation born from a heart that loves God and others will emerge.

BIODATA



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