

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY LEADERSHIP ON EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

Interpersonal intelligence in early childhood is strongly influenced by the surrounding environment, particularly the family setting. The leadership of the head of the family is believed to play a crucial role in supporting the development of children's social abilities. This study aims to examine the extent to which family leadership contributes to the interpersonal intelligence of young children. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed, involving 30 parents of early childhood children as respondents. The instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire utilizing a Likert scale. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the assistance of Jamovi software. The analysis revealed that family leadership has a significant influence on children's interpersonal intelligence, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.553 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. These findings highlight the importance of parental roles in providing guidance, maintaining open communication, and modeling appropriate behavior to support children's social development from an early age.

Keywords: Family leadership, Interpersonal Intelligence, Early Childhood

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood development is a critical phase that lays the foundation for personality formation, cognitive patterns, and essential life skills in the future (Sholekhah et al., 2025).

This period is marked by rapid growth across various domains, including intelligence, which is a key area that requires focused attention. Intelligence refers to an individual's ability to understand, manage, and apply various aspects of knowledge and skills in daily life (Gignac & Szodorai, 2024).

It is not limited to academic or logical abilities but encompasses multiple types of intelligence that complement one another (Mudzakkir et al., 2024). Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is widely referenced in understanding the diversity of human intelligence.

According to this theory, there are eight types of intelligence: logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal,

intrapersonal, and naturalist intelligence. In later developments, Gardner introduced additional types such as spiritual intelligence and what he referred to as half-intelligences (Gardner, 1999).

Among these, interpersonal intelligence plays a vital role in children's social life. Interpersonal intelligence is defined as an individual's ability to recognize the feelings and needs of others, interact effectively, and maintain harmonious social relationships (Kamal et al., 2024). In early childhood, this form of intelligence is particularly crucial as it represents a foundational stage for developing essential social and emotional competencies (Fitriyani et al., 2024). Children with strong interpersonal intelligence can communicate effectively, show empathy, and resolve conflicts positively in social interactions (Ridwan & Riyanti, 2025).

The development of interpersonal intelligence in children is strongly influenced by the family as their primary



and closest environment. Within this context, the leadership of the head of the family becomes a critical factor. Family leadership involves not only decision-making but also the ability of parents to guide, direct, and shape the character of their children through daily interactions (Utomo et al., 2022).

Several aspects of family leadership contribute to the development of interpersonal intelligence, including the ability to provide direction, open and effective communication, and behavioral role-modeling (Liu et al., 2024). These three aspects play significant roles in fostering interpersonal intelligence from an early age. The ability to guide reflects how parents provide clear expectations for behavior and set firm yet rational boundaries.

In line with this, Li et al. (2025) assert that clear guidance and consistent rules positively affect children's self-regulation and emotional management skills, supporting the quality of their social interactions. In the context of discipline development, parents shape early childhood discipline by modeling appropriate behaviors, involving children directly in expected activities, and explaining the importance of disciplined behavior. They also establish mutual agreements with their children regarding rewards and consequences for certain behaviors (Oktaviani et al., 2023).

Moreover, open and effective communication between parents and children fosters strong emotional bonds. Children who are accustomed to being listened to, involved in discussions, and whose opinions are respected are more likely to express their feelings and build healthy relationships with others. Nurazizah & Marisa (2024) found that the quality of verbal communication between parents and children is closely linked to

emotional development; the better the communication, the greater the child's ability to express emotions and establish healthy interpersonal relationships. Honest, empathetic, and consistent communication by parents also helps children manage their emotions and strengthens emotional closeness (Ambarwati & Yulianingsih, 2023).

Meanwhile, parental role-modeling serves as a key foundation in children's social learning. Harti (2023) emphasizes that parents' behavioral examples significantly shape children's morality through everyday life and position parents as effective role models for instilling moral values from an early age. When these three aspects are implemented consistently, children gain a strong foundation to develop interpersonal skills such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication in daily life.

However, not all family heads are capable of implementing effective leadership practices as described above. Several factors such as limited parental understanding of leadership roles, low educational levels, economic pressures, and family disharmony often hinder the development of children's interpersonal intelligence. According to Yang (2024), families with inconsistent or unsupportive leadership tend to raise children who struggle with social skills, such as cooperation, perspective-taking, and conflict management. These family environments typically lack the structure, stability, and emotional warmth that children need to build healthy interpersonal relationships.

This situation is particularly concerning during early childhood, a crucial stage for establishing the foundations of social and emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which family



leadership contributes to the development of interpersonal intelligence in early childhood. Based on the above background, this study aims to analyze the effect of family leadership on the interpersonal intelligence of young children.

METHOD

This study is quantitative research that aims to examine the influence of family leadership on the interpersonal intelligence of early childhood children. Quantitative research, as defined by Sarwono & Handayani (2021) is a scientific approach that utilizes numerical data and statistical analysis to answer research questions or test hypotheses. A closed-ended questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Each item was designed using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), to Strongly Disagree (SD). This scale was applied to measure respondents' perceptions regarding indicators of family leadership and early childhood interpersonal intelligence.

Variable X: Family Leadership

These variable measures the role of the head of the family in leading the household, particularly in educating and shaping the character of the child. It consists of 7 items developed based on indicators such as guidance, communication, role modeling, discipline, and emotional support.

Table 1: Indicators and Number of Items for Variable X (Family Leadership)

No	Indicator of Variable X	Number of Items
1	Open and Effective Communication	3
2	Parental Guidance	2
3	Behavioral Role Modeling	2

Variable Y: Interpersonal Intelligence in Early Childhood

These variable measures children's ability to form social relationships, understand the feelings of others, cooperate, and demonstrate empathy. Interpersonal intelligence is essential for the socio-emotional development of young children. The instrument consists of 7 items that reflect the child's interpersonal behavior as observed by their parents.

Table 2: Indicators and Number of Items for Variable Y

No	Indicator of Variable Y	Number of Items
1	Social Interaction Skills	1
2	Cooperative Behavior	1
3	Empathy and Emotional Awareness	1
4	Conflict Resolution Skills	1
5	Emotional Sensitivity	1
6	Sharing Behavior	1
7	Interpersonal Communication	1

The study was conducted at TK Negeri 4 Kandangan in June 2025. The population consisted of parents whose children were enrolled in the kindergarten. A total of 30 respondents were selected as the research sample. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, whereby participants were chosen based on their willingness to participate and fulfillment of the research criteria—specifically, being parents of early childhood-aged children who are actively involved in their upbringing.

Prior to the main data collection, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression to determine the influence of family leadership on the interpersonal intelligence of early childhood children. Before conducting the regression analysis, a normality test was carried out using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Further analysis included testing the model fit (using R, R²,



and F-test), as well as examining the regression coefficients to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. All statistical analyses were performed using Jamovi software, with initial data processing conducted in Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to the main analysis, validity and reliability tests were conducted on the research instruments. Validity was assessed by examining the item-total correlation. The results showed that all statement items had correlation values above 0.3, ranging from 0.341 to 0.746. This indicates that each item was adequately able to measure the intended construct, and therefore all items were deemed valid. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.883. This indicates a high level of internal consistency, as an alpha value ≥ 0.7 is generally considered reliable. Thus, the instrument was regarded as both valid and reliable for use in this study.

Table 3. Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test Results

Variable	X	Y
N	30	30
Shapiro–Wilk W	0.955	0.951
Shapiro–Wilk p	0,233	0,183

Subsequently, a normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk method, with the results presented in Table 3. The significance value for the family leadership variable (X) was 0.233, and for the interpersonal intelligence variable (Y) was 0.183. Since both p-values exceed 0.05, it can be concluded that the data for both variables are normally distributed and thus appropriate for parametric statistical analysis.

Table 4. Regression Model Fit Summary

Model	R	R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.743	0.553	34.6	1	28	< .001

To examine the effect of family leadership on children's interpersonal intelligence, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. The regression results showed a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.743 and a coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.553, as shown in Table 4. This indicates that 55.3% of the variation in children's interpersonal intelligence can be explained by the family leadership variable. The F-test yielded an F-value of 34.600 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating that the regression model was statistically significant.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Coefficient Results

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	9.988	3.430	2.91	0.007	-
X	0.669	0.114	5.88	<.001	0.743

The regression coefficient results are presented in Table 5. The intercept was 9.988, and the regression coefficient for family leadership was 0.669. This suggests that for every one-unit increase in the family leadership score, the interpersonal intelligence score increases by 0.669 points. The significance value of $p < 0.001$ confirms that this effect is statistically significant. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient value of 0.743 indicates a strong effect of family leadership on interpersonal intelligence.

Based on the statistical analysis, it can be concluded that family leadership has a significant influence on the interpersonal intelligence of early childhood children. The contributing aspects of leadership include the ability of family heads to



provide clear guidance, build open and effective communication, serve as behavioral role models, and apply appropriate parenting strategies. These findings underscore the critical role of parents as family leaders in shaping children's social skills from an early age.

These results are in line with Liu et al. (2024), who emphasize that family leadership encompasses several essential dimensions that directly support the development of children's interpersonal intelligence. These dimensions include the ability of parents to provide clear directions, maintain open and effective communication, model appropriate daily behavior, and implement consistent and directed parenting. Similarly, Asni et al. (2025) assert that communication patterns within the family play a vital role in shaping children's social, cognitive, and emotional development. Such communication patterns also influence long-term character and behavioral development.

Harti (2023) also supports the view that parental role modeling has a significant influence on the formation of children's morality through direct and continuous daily interaction. Juwita & Yunitasari (2024) highlight that early role modeling serves as a primary behavioral reference for children, supporting not only motor and cognitive development but also the formation of positive character traits and the prevention of deviant behavior and moral decline. Furthermore, Dhiu & Fono (2022) argue that parenting practices directly affect children's emotional development, either positively or negatively, depending on the quality and consistency of care provided. Nuraeni & Lubis (2022) add that obstacles to children's moral development—especially the emergence of negative character traits—often stem from parenting styles that are not aligned with developmental stages.

Theoretically, these findings are supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979), which places the family as the most immediate and influential microsystem in a child's social development. In addition, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) explains that children learn behaviors through observation and imitation of social figures around them, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Therefore, positive family leadership serves as a foundational element in nurturing children's interpersonal intelligence through daily modeling, interaction, and habituation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that family leadership has a significant influence on the interpersonal intelligence of early childhood children. The results of the simple linear regression analysis revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.553 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating that 55.3% of the variation in children's interpersonal intelligence can be explained by family leadership.

Therefore, the leadership style adopted by family heads plays a crucial role in shaping children's social abilities from an early age. Family leadership involves the capabilities of individuals who serve as leaders within the household, whether they are fathers, mothers, or guardians, in providing clear guidance, establishing open and effective communication, modeling appropriate behavior in daily life, and fostering emotionally supportive and consistent relationships.

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