

Enhancing Parenting to Prevent Negative Discipline in Yogyakarta: Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract: Data show that 60% of children aged 2 to 14 have experienced physical punishment from their parents. Based on data from the Simfoni PPA KemenPPPA (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children), in 2023, there were 29,884 cases of violence recorded throughout Indonesia. Objective: This study aimed to enhance the parenting skills of prospective parents in the Bantul region to prevent the use of negative disciplinary methods on children. This study employed a mixed-methods design with a Sequential Explanatory approach. The quantitative phase used a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest design, involving 37 prospective parents as the sample. The qualitative phase utilised Participatory Action Research, recruiting a sample of 5 couples of prospective parents, 2 counsellors, and 1 policy maker. The average attitude score of prospective parents before the intervention was 62.11, which increased to 80.38 after the intervention. A significant p -value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that the intervention concerning negative disciplinary measures on children has a significant impact on the attitudes of prospective parents. Several challenges faced by prospective parents in enhancing parenting skills include a lack of experience in child-rearing, mental unpreparedness for parenthood, and limited time due to work and other activities. The government needs to formulate policies that encourage positive parenting approaches and non-violent discipline, and launch awareness campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of negative disciplinary measures and the importance of positive parenting methods.

Keywords: Children, Discipline, Parenting skills, Prospective parents

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INTRODUCTION

Negative disciplinary punishment for children is an approach that prioritizes repression or punishment as a response to behaviors that violate rules or norms (Mowen et al., 2020). Physical punishment is often employed based on the principle and belief that this type of punishment is most suitable for educating children (Ganapathy et al., 2022). According to the WHO (2021), physical punishment constitutes a violation of children's rights to respect for their physical integrity and dignity, as well as their health, development, education, and protection from violence and other forms of punishment that are cruel, dehumanizing, or degrading (WHO, 2021).

Physical punishment is commonly observed globally, both at home and in schools. Data indicate that 60% of children aged between 2 and 14 years have experienced physical punishment from their parents (WHO, 2021). UNICEF stated that based on nationally representative surveys conducted in 56 countries between 2005 and 2013, approximately 6 out of 10 children aged 2 to 14 years were subjected to physical punishment by adults at home in the past month. On average, 17% of children experienced severe physical punishment (such as hitting the head, face, or ears or being hit forcefully), and repeatedly), while in some countries this figure exceeds 40% (UNICEF, 2023). According to data from

the Simfoni PPA of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), there were 29,884 reported cases of violence in Indonesia in 2023. The same data reveals that 7,583 individuals were perpetrators of violence against children, with 28% of perpetrators being friends or partners and 21% being parents. The largest proportion of incidents occurred in households (53%) and in schools (9%) ([SIMFONI-PPA, 2023](#)). In 2021, the rate of violence against boys and girls aged 0-17 years in the Special Region of Yogyakarta was 0.46% ([Bappeda, 2021b](#)). Bantul Regency recorded the highest number of cases of violence against children in Yogyakarta, and Bappeda data indicated 126 cases involving children aged 0-17 years in 2021 ([Bappeda, 2021a](#)).

Parents often resort to physical punishment for disobedience because children are perceived as difficult to manage, beyond acceptable limits, unrepentant, or repeatedly making mistakes ([Ma et al., 2022](#)). Factors justifying physical punishment as a means of discipline include a lack of parental knowledge, where parents are unaware of or do not have knowledge of alternative, more effective methods for disciplining children, and the belief that physical punishment is the only way to teach children about boundaries and consequences ([Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019](#)). Parental history, including their own experiences of physical punishment during childhood, also plays a role ([Neaverson et al., 2022](#)).

According to [Rahmah & Kurniawati \(2021\)](#), couples preparing for marriage and planning to have children should be equipped with parenting knowledge and skills ([Rahmah & Kurniawati, 2021](#)). In Indonesia, numerous institutions, including community health centers and non-governmental organizations, offer parenting classes covering a range of topics such as child development, effective communication, positive discipline, and becoming better parents ([Kiling-Bunga et al., 2020](#)). However, the comprehensiveness of these parenting classes in Indonesia varies depending on the provider and available resources, with some classes adopting a more comprehensive approach, while others are still in developmental stages ([Kiling-Bunga et al., 2020](#)). This study aimed to enhance the parenting skills of prospective parents to prevent the use of negative disciplinary methods on children in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

METHODS

The research design employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain more effective, comprehensive, reliable, and objective data ([Creswell, 2019](#)). Before conducting the study, the author obtained approval from the Ethics Committee of Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, under Number 3417/KEP-UNISA/II/2024.

The quantitative design was a pre-experimental approach with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The quantitative sample consisted of 37 prospective brides and grooms registered at the Office of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta, selected using purposive sampling with inclusion criteria. Prospective brides and grooms registered at the Office of Religious Affairs, Banguntapan District. Willing to participate in interview sessions or focus group discussions related to the improvement of parenting skills and Willing to receive education and information regarding the prevention of negative disciplinary practices in children. The exclusion criteria in this study were prospective brides and grooms who did not have plans to have children in the future and those with mental limitations. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained informed consent signed by the respondents. The quantitative data were collected by using the Corporal Punishment Myth Scale questionnaire, adapted from Damayanti and Djuwita (2021), which underwent validity testing with a P-value of 0.00 and reliability testing with Cronbach's alpha of 0.84. The intervention provided in this study consisted of an educational video on positive parenting techniques and a leaflet containing a summary of parenting information. The categorization of attitudes toward parenting skills related to negative disciplinary practices was based on the total scores obtained from the Corporal Punishment Myth Scale questionnaire. The total scores were grouped into three categories: poor attitude (<56%), adequate attitude (56%–75%), and good attitude (76%–100%). The quantitative data processing techniques

included editing, scoring, coding, tabulating, and data entry. Quantitative data analysis involved univariate and bivariate techniques. The bivariate analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

The qualitative method employed was generic qualitative research, recruiting a sample of 5 pairs of prospective brides and grooms, 2 counselors, and 1 head of the Office of Religious Affairs using purposive sampling. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from the participants. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with participants, using a previously piloted interview guide. The interviews were conducted prior to the intervention. Interviews were recorded and conducted individually in a pre-prepared private room, each lasting between 45 and 55 minutes. The qualitative data analysis using participatory action research encompassed data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Rigor in qualitative research was maintained by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

RESULT

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

No	Characteristic	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1.	Education:		
	Low (\leq Junior Secondary)	4	10.8
	High (\geq Senior Secondary)	33	89.2
2.	Occupation:		
	Private Sector Employee	19	51.4
	Self-Employed	18	48.6
3.	Income:		
	Low \leq Rp. 2.216.463	20	54.1
	High \geq Rp. 2.216.463	17	45.9
4.	Experience of Negative Disciplinary Punishment in Childhood:		
	Never	4	10.8
	Experienced	33	89.3

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Attitudes Towards Parenting Skills Regarding Negative Disciplinary Practices Among Prospective Parents

Category	Pretest		Posttest	
	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Poor	13	35.1	2	5.4
Adequate	14	37.8	1	2.7
Good	10	27.0	34	91.9
Total	37	100.0	37	100.0

Table 3. Attitudes of Prospective Parents Towards Parenting Skills and Negative Disciplinary Practices

	Mean	N	Z	Sig
<i>Pretest</i>	62.11	37	-5.308 ^b	.000
<i>Posttest</i>	80.38			

The qualitative data revealed four major themes: the impact of negative discipline, factors influencing negative discipline, obstacles, and the hopes and needs of prospective parents.

1. Impact of Negative Discipline

This theme describes the effects or consequences of negative discipline on children, with most prospective parents aware of its adverse impacts.

"...physical punishment on children can cause trauma..." (P1)

"...physical punishment is very harmful to children; I have a social institution where children who experience verbal or physical abuse at home develop trauma..." (Counsellor 1)

Similar sentiments were expressed by participants 2 and 7:

"...negative punishment affects, what's the name, the psychology of the child..." (P2)

"...it has a significant impact not only on physical development but also on the child's psychological or mental state..." (P7)

Participants agreed that physical punishment can be detrimental and cause trauma, especially for children who have experienced violence at home. Additionally, negative discipline also affects the child's psychological well-being.

2. Factors Influencing Negative Discipline

This theme outlines the knowledge of prospective parents regarding factors that arise when using negative discipline on children.

"...if someone was frequently punished as a child, they might think that when they become parents, they should discipline their children similarly..." (P2)

"...childhood experiences greatly influence us; if we were used to being scolded, pinched, or twisted, we might unintentionally replicate those actions when we are overwhelmed or cannot control our emotions..." (P3)

Participants noted that education impacts parenting styles.

"...education significantly affects us; if we have lower education, our thinking might be limited to our own experiences rather than a broader understanding..." (P4)

"...education is very influential as it shapes our thinking, whether to apply positive or negative discipline..." (P7)

Additionally, participants mentioned that the environment greatly influences negative discipline.

"...the environment affects us a lot; if we see many people using harsh methods, we might follow suit..." (P2)

"...but indeed, in my home environment, many still use violence to discipline children, which affects us in raising our children..." (P10)

Participants emphasized that factors influencing negative discipline include childhood experiences, particularly negative physical experiences, which shape adult attitudes towards discipline. Lack of education can narrow perspectives on child-rearing, and growing up in environments where violence is prevalent can influence one to adopt similar methods.

3. Obstacles

This theme defines various challenges faced by prospective parents in enhancing their parenting skills to avoid negative discipline.

"...the obstacle might be the lack of understanding or knowledge about good parenting ..." (P5)

"...the biggest obstacle is the lack of parental knowledge about parenting skills..." (P3)

Participants also mentioned time constraints as a significant issue.

"...also because of time; it's hard for us to find time since we work every day and come home late..." (P1)

"...the lack of free time due to busy wedding preparations or work ..." (P10)

Mental preparedness was also cited as a challenge.

"...another obstacle might be the mental unpreparedness to become parents, which makes it hard to control emotions ..." (P5)

"...the lack of mental readiness or pre-marital preparation could be due to unexpected pregnancies or other issues; essentially, it's a lack of preparation for parenting." (P7)

Participants stated that inadequate understanding of effective parenting skills, time constraints, and mental readiness issues are major obstacles to providing optimal child-rearing.

4. Hopes and Needs of Prospective Parents

This theme explains the hopes and needs of participants to improve their parenting skills. All participants expressed a desire for specialized parenting programs to learn effective child-rearing techniques.

"...I hope the government can provide or have special programs to teach or guide us as prospective parents on how to raise children properly..." (P1)

"...we would appreciate specialised training or classes on parenting and managing emotions in the household ..." (P5)

Participants also hoped for family and community support in child-rearing.

"...support from the community is also necessary, as social and cultural norms have changed ..." (P4)

"...family support is important to help us learn about good parenting and gain more insights from them..." (P6)

Furthermore, participants expressed a need for educational media such as videos, leaflets, or posters to facilitate learning about parenting.

"...education could come from apps or videos or simple posters that make it easy to learn ..." (P4)

"...since we are in the social media age, perhaps the government could create video content on positive and negative discipline..." (P5)

"...a parenting app with educational videos and tips would be very helpful..." (P6).

DISCUSSION

From [Table 1](#), it is evident that most respondents have a high level of education (89.2%). Educated women tend to make independent decisions ([Nafisah & Astuti, 2023](#)). A higher educational background generally translates to a better understanding of child-rearing. According to Notoatmodjo dalam [Pakpahan et al., \(2021\)](#), education is a process of attitude and behavior modification, as well as human maturation through teaching and training efforts. Lack of educational opportunities can affect the information and knowledge available about parenting ([Febrianti & Astuti, 2022](#)). Education enables parents to learn various positive discipline methods, such as positive reinforcement, time-out, or logical consequences, which are preferable to physical punishment that negatively impacts child development ([Halloran, 2020](#)).

In this study, 51.4% of respondents are employed in the private sector, while 48.6% are self-employed. Employment affects parental decision-making and problem-solving, thereby influencing parenting skills improvement ([Azizah et al., 2022](#)). Parents who are busy with work or careers often find their attention to family, including their children, diminished, and in many cases, this leads to neglect of their children's needs. Parents play a crucial role in the transition to parenthood, influencing decisions about parenting practices due to ongoing cohabitation and financial challenges even after

marriage ([Astuti et al., 2020](#)). This finding is supported by [Kundre and Bataha \(2019\)](#), who indicated that working mothers often experience a lack of quality time with their children.

In terms of income, 54.1% of respondents reported having low earnings, while 45.9% reported higher earnings. This indicates a variation in respondents' income levels, though the majority are still categorized within the low-income bracket. The impact of the predominantly low income among respondents may affect various aspects of life, including the enhancement of parenting skills. This is consistent with the research of [Sano, Mammen and Houghten \(2021\)](#), which suggests that parents with low incomes may face additional challenges in providing optimal education and attention to their children. Moreover, income levels can influence access to educational resources and information about child-rearing practices ([Wiborg & Grätz, 2022](#)).

Most respondents reported having experienced negative disciplinary measures during their childhood, which can shape their perspectives on applying such measures to their own children. Childhood is a critical developmental stage, making it essential to address these experiences ([Kurniati et al., 2023](#)). Individuals who have experienced negative discipline may react in two extremes when parenting their own children: they may become overly harsh and authoritarian, or conversely, excessively lenient and reluctant to impose any form of punishment out of fear of harming their children as they were harmed ([Wiggers & Paas, 2022](#)). Negative experiences with discipline can also make individuals more sensitive to their children's emotional needs, leading them to seek more positive and educational approaches while avoiding harsh physical or verbal punishment ([Heilmann et al., 2021](#)). From an Islamic perspective, child-rearing emphasizes compassion and kindness, reflecting the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation) ([Rokhmah et al., 2023](#)).

From Table 2, before the intervention, 37.8% of respondents had a sufficient attitude category and 27% had a good attitude category. After the intervention, the proportion of respondents with a good attitude increased to 91.9%, while those with a sufficient attitude decreased to 2.7%. The average attitude score of prospective parents before the intervention was 62.11, which increased to 80.38 after the intervention among 37 respondents, with *Z*hitung being greater than *Z*tabel ($-5.308 > .000$ or *p*-value 0.000), indicating significant improvement in the attitude scores.

The findings of this study further reinforce previous research indicating that interventions focused on positive parenting and guidance can enhance the parenting attitudes of caregivers and reduce the incidence of negative disciplinary measures towards children ([Vseteckova et al., 2022](#)). Consistent with the research conducted by [Slotkin, Bierman and Jacobson \(2023\)](#), which found that training in positive disciplinary alternatives can alter parents' attitudes towards negative discipline, this study also supports the idea that educational interventions have a significant impact on such attitudes. [Carroll \(2022\)](#), similarly observed that educational interventions about positive discipline alternatives significantly affected parents' attitudes towards negative disciplinary practices, with data analysis revealing a significant difference between the intervention and control groups in terms of attitudes towards negative discipline ($p < 0.05$).

Further, [Candan and Dogan \(2023\)](#) demonstrated that parenting programs incorporating positive discipline techniques significantly impacted parents' attitudes towards negative disciplinary methods. Statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the parenting program participants and the control group regarding attitudes towards negative discipline ($p < 0.01$). Similar studies conclude that interventions are impactful if there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results, with significance values indicating changes in attitudes towards positive parenting following psychoeducational interventions ($\text{Asymp.Sig (2-tailed)} < 0.05$) ([Nugroho & Cahyanti, 2023](#)). The readiness of prospective parents plays a crucial role in their transition to parenthood, affecting their ability to navigate this change smoothly ([Wiyanti et al., 2024](#)).

Qualitative results revealed that participants agreed that negative discipline could be detrimental to children and cause trauma. This aligns with who found that negative disciplinary practices can have significant adverse effects, particularly on psychological and emotional development. Their Research noted that children subjected to frequent physical punishment often exhibit higher levels of anxiety compared to those who are not exposed to such negative discipline. [Wang et al., \(2024\)](#) also found that

children consistently receiving negative disciplinary measures face a higher risk of depression and anxiety disorders in adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, negative discipline can lead to enduring psychological trauma, with affected children often struggling with emotional regulation and feeling insecure in their environment ([Barongo et al., 2024](#)).

The study also identified factors influencing negative discipline, such as childhood experiences. This finding corroborates [Logan, Windisch and Simi \(2024\)](#), who reported that childhood experiences of negative discipline, such as frequent physical punishment, have long-term effects on an individual's mindset into adulthood, and those who experienced harsh treatment as children are more likely to employ similar parenting methods with their own children. Parents with negative childhood experiences are nearly three times more likely to use physical punishment with their children ([Hughes et al., 2022](#)).

Additionally, the study found that education influences parenting skills enhancement. This finding aligns with [Lu, Huang and Chen \(2023\)](#), who noted that parental education provides the knowledge and skills necessary for effective child-rearing. Educated parents generally have a better understanding of child development and needs, leading to more effective parenting approaches. Parental education can also impact knowledge and skills in managing behavior, with trained parents more likely to use positive discipline strategies and avoid negative disciplinary methods ([Ofoha et al., 2019](#)). Furthermore, Islamic education is essential for imparting religious values to children, reinforcing moral and ethical understanding, and guiding behavior ([Yulianingsih, 2021](#)).

Environmental factors also play a role in promoting positive parenting and preventing negative discipline. This is supported by [Bush et al., \(2020\)](#) who identified the environment as a significant factor influencing disciplinary practices. The environment shapes the values and norms applied in child-rearing. If an environment endorses violence or physical punishment as acceptable means of behavior management, parents may be more likely to adopt negative disciplinary methods ([Sugiarti et al., 2022](#)).

Interviews revealed that a major barrier identified in the study was a lack of knowledge. Knowledge, defined as the ability to remember and interpret information, is crucial for effective parenting ([Millroth, 2021](#)). [Bailey et al., \(2022\)](#), highlighted the importance of understanding good parenting practices for effective child-rearing. Parents who lack an understanding of the importance of clear boundaries or consistent consequences may struggle with behavior management. Similarly, [Sanders et al., \(2022\)](#) found that parental knowledge enhances efforts to build children's character, align parenting with values and norms, and address parenting challenges effectively.

Time constraints also pose a challenge for prospective parents in acquiring effective parenting skills. Balancing daily tasks, work, and family responsibilities often leaves little time for learning new skills. [Refaeli et al., \(2024\)](#), reported that prospective parents often struggle to find time to learn effective parenting due to job demands and family responsibilities, which increases stress levels and impacts their ability to implement parenting skills effectively.

Another identified barrier was mental unpreparedness for parenthood. This finding aligns with [Kamis \(2021\)](#), who reported that poor maternal mental health correlates with negative parenting practices. Psychological issues can lead to negative parenting behavior, reduced attention to children's needs, or increased household dysfunction ([Cueli et al., 2024](#)). Other research underscores the importance of maternal mental health in determining current and future child development ([Drzymalla et al., 2023](#)).

The study also revealed that prospective parents hope for the government to provide specialised training, parenting classes, webinars, or accessible educational programs to aid in effective child-rearing. This aligns with [Ndengeyingoma et al., \(2022\)](#), who highlighted that training in effective parenting can help parents develop new skills, such as conflict resolution without negative discipline. Support from the community and family is also crucial for effective parenting ([Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020](#)). Social and cultural changes require positive support and guidance from the surrounding environment to ensure good parenting practices ([Khan, 2020](#)).

Participants expressed a need for effective learning methods, including educational media such as videos, posters, leaflets, and other easily accessible and understandable content. The advancement of communication technology 4.0 has made media a significant source of information (Li, 2023). Bengtsson and Johansson (2022), noted that media utilization for information needs is widespread, with young mothers increasingly relying on online resources for parenting information. Approximately 70% of young mothers use online media for parenting information, while 30% prefer traditional methods.

CONCLUSIONS

The application of interventions involving negative disciplinary measures has a significant impact on the attitudes of prospective parents. Several challenges faced by prospective parents in enhancing their parenting skills include a lack of experience in child-rearing, mental unpreparedness for parenthood, and limited time due to work and other activities. Prospective parents also express a need for specialized educational programs, support from their environment and family, as well as parental education delivered through engaging and easily comprehensible media. Future studies are recommended not only to measure changes in attitude but also to include direct observations or follow-up interviews regarding the application of parenting skills after marriage or having children.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Khilda Durrotun Nafisah (KDN), Andari Wuri Astuti (AWA), Islamiyatur Rokhmah (IR), Warsiti (W), Ayano Kit (AK)

KDN and AWA: Conceptualization, methodology, editing. KDN and IR: Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, writing-reviewing. KDN and AWA: review and editing. W and AK: supervising. All authors read and accept the final manuscripts.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest of any sort that could influence the impartiality of the study.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon request to the corresponding author.

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