



Parents' Efforts in Incorporating Anti-Hedonistic Values in Adolescents

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Abstract

The phenomenon of a hedonistic lifestyle among urban adolescents shows a worrying trend, especially in the context of social transformation in the digital era. This study aims to examine the role of parents in instilling anti-hedonistic life values in adolescents in Metro City. A qualitative approach with a case study type was used to explore in-depth forms of role modeling, internalizing spiritual values, and social control strategies within the family environment. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, then analyzed using an interactive model. The results show that parents play an active role through three main approaches: first, role modeling in living a simple life that instills the values of contentment and asceticism; second, habituating worship and positive behavior from an early age that strengthens children's moral and spiritual awareness; and third, social control based on dialogue and trust that creates an educational climate within the family. These three strategies have effectively fortified adolescents from consumer culture's influence and formed independent, resilient, and religious characters. This study emphasizes the importance of the family as the primary institution in character education based on Islamic values amidst the challenges of modernity and globalization.

Article History:

Received 14-03-2025

Revised 10-04-2025

Accepted 21-07-2025

Keywords:

Adolescents;

Anti-Hedonistic;

Parental Effort.



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INTRODUCTION

The family is the primary environment in internalizing life values and forming a child's character. The family environment is the first place where adolescents learn and experience life, both as individuals and as members of society. In the context of adolescents, the influence of the family is very significant; they will thrive if the family environment is positive and pleasant. Otherwise, adolescents' moral character development will be hampered (Saetban, 2020). Adolescence is a time when humans search for their identity, often experience confusion, are easily influenced by new things, and become role models. Therefore, the family environment is the most crucial and primarily responsible for efforts to overcome juvenile delinquency itself. Children who imitate their idols without carefully considering the moral implications can sometimes lead to juvenile crime (Qamariyah, 2021)

If we look at the current issues, technological advances, especially among teenagers, have significantly impacted social transformation. This disease causes behavioral changes that directly impact the character development of today's Generation Z. In this digital era, hedonistic behavior is common among young people. Teenagers who exhibit hedonism value pleasure over doing good and often express this by trying new things (Martina, 2023). Observations conducted by researchers in Metro City also showed strong indications of consumerist behavior among teenagers, such as the habit of hanging out in cafes and fast food restaurants, shopping for branded goods, and actively sharing this lifestyle on social media. These activities are mostly carried out after school or at night. (Observation, Kota Metro, 2024). This phenomenon shows that the flow of consumer culture and digital existence is increasingly eroding the values of simplicity, spirituality, and social responsibility.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of hedonism among adolescents cannot be separated from the psychosocial pressures they face (Labh et al., 2018). Adolescents often feel the need to be "recognized" and accepted by their social group (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). Those who don't follow trends are considered left behind or even ostracized (Goncharov, 2020). In this regard, the values of usefulness, hard work, and integrity are starting to be marginalized by the narrative of an instant and luxurious life (Semilet et al., 2021). This certainly poses a serious challenge to national character development, especially amidst government efforts to strengthen character education based on national values, spirituality, and independence.

This situation demands the presence of parents as agents of control and educators who not only set boundaries but also build awareness and lead by example. Parents who are able to foster open communication, provide a contextual understanding of religious and social values, and serve as role models for simple living have a significant influence in shaping children's character, making them resilient and resistant to hedonistic lifestyles. However, not all parents have adequate strategies or understanding to navigate these dynamics (Amalia et al., 2024).

Therefore, it is important to conduct an in-depth study of the strategies and approaches used by parents to instill anti-hedonistic values in adolescents. This research uses the local context of Metro City, Lampung, as a case study to illustrate empirical reality and formulate an applicable and contextual approach. This research is expected to contribute not only to the development of educational science and family psychology but also serve as a practical reference for educators, policymakers, and parents in addressing the social challenges facing today's adolescents.

Several previous studies have highlighted the important role of families, particularly parents, in shaping adolescents' consumer behavior and hedonistic lifestyles. For example, Azzahra (2024) found that family involvement in guiding adolescents' behavioral patterns is a crucial factor in countering negative environmental influences, particularly excessive consumption and uncontrolled digital presence. From this perspective, families are

positioned as the primary socializing agents that can shape children's attitudes, values, and life orientations (Azzahra, 2024).

Another study conducted by Nilawati & Muhammad (2014) used a quantitative approach at Kesatrian 2 Senior High School in Semarang. This study showed that adolescents' consumer behavior was positively correlated with their parents' income levels. Adolescents from high-income families tended to have higher consumption intensity and were more susceptible to a hedonistic lifestyle. This study made an important contribution in mapping economic background as a determinant of consumer behavior, but it has not yet explored the aspects of family values and educational strategies in depth (Sipunga & Muhammad, 2014). Meanwhile, a thesis by Wahyudi (2023) entitled "*The Role of Parents in Overcoming Hedonistic Behavior in Adolescents in East Pademawu Village, Pamekasan Regency*" revealed that parents' active guidance and supervision of their children can be a key bulwark against a hedonistic lifestyle. This research highlights the importance of persuasive approaches and role models, particularly in rural contexts that still hold strong traditional values (Wahyudi, 2023).

In general, these three studies share a similarity in emphasizing the urgency of family involvement—especially parents—in shaping adolescent behavior patterns related to consumption and hedonism. They also agree that the absence of social control from the family can increase the risk of deviant behavior in adolescents, particularly in the context of consumer culture and digital existence. However, several significant differences create research gaps in these studies. Most previous studies have focused on identifying consumer behavior and the external factors that influence it (such as family finances), and have not qualitatively explored how parental strategies and parenting patterns instill anti-hedonistic life values.

Recognizing this gap, this study offers novelty by exploring parental strategies for instilling anti-hedonistic values in adolescents in urban communities, particularly in Metro City, Lampung. This research seeks to explore in-depth communication patterns, role models, habits, and parental supervision as part of character education based on spiritual and social values. Therefore, this study not only fills a gap in the previous literature but also contributes to developing a more adaptive approach to family education to meet the challenges of the times.

METHODS

This research is a field study with a qualitative case study approach conducted in Metro City. The main objective of this research is to explore in depth the contribution of Islamic values in shaping moderate religious attitudes in adolescents, particularly through the role of parents in instilling anti-hedonism values. Primary data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of the social activities of adolescents and parents in the area, which is known as a center of social interaction and adolescent consumption. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, and other

relevant scientific references (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The main informants in this study consisted of parents and adolescents who live or frequently have activities in the Metro City area of Lampung Province, selected purposively based on their relevance to the issue under study.

In analyzing the data, this study used the interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was carried out to filter and simplify the raw data from observations and interviews to focus on relevant findings (Moleong, 2016). Next, the simplified data were presented systematically to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification. The final stage was drawing conclusions formulated based on field notes as an answer to the research focus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parents' Exemplary Behavior in Simplicity

Research in Metro City shows that parental role models in living a simple life are one of the most effective approaches to instilling anti-hedonistic values in adolescents. A simple lifestyle consistently demonstrated by parents—from their dress code and consumption patterns to their family's financial management—indirectly internalizes spiritual and moral values in their children.

For example, Mrs. Fatma, an informant from Yosodadi Village, said she always tries to set an example for her children by living modestly and not being tempted by luxury goods or consumer trends. She also emphasized spending money on essentials, not lifestyle choices.

"Personally, I always try to live a simple life, not overspending on things and not following current trends. In my opinion, living simply doesn't mean being poor, but rather knowing your limits and not going overboard. That way, my children will know what's important and what's just a fad," (Mrs. Fatma, personal communication, January 21, 2025).

This attitude has a significant impact on children's character development. Teenagers like Lutfi, who participated in the study, expressed comfort with a simple lifestyle because they were accustomed to seeing their parents living frugally, modestly, and unconcerned with social status. They stated that they were not easily tempted by friends' invitations to buy luxury goods or follow the lifestyles of social media influencers.

"My parents are very simple, no-frills people. From a young age, I've been accustomed to seeing them live simply, not showing off or extravagantly. That had a huge impact on me. So when they gave me advice about living frugally and not chasing fleeting pleasures, I could understand because they set the example themselves. It wasn't just talk, but it was evident in their daily lives and their diligent worship" (Lutfi, personal communication, February 21, 2025).

Theoretically, the value of simplicity exemplified by parents is highly relevant in Islamic character education. The concepts of contentment (qana'ah) and zuhud (non-attachment to the world) are core values that serve as the foundation for developing resilient individuals in the face of a consumerist and hedonistic culture. In the Quran, Allah SWT praises a moderate attitude towards consumption: "*And those who when they spend (property), they are not excessive, and they are not (also) miserly, and (the spending) is in the middle of such*" (QS. Al-Furqan [25]:67).

Suyadi's (2020) research also confirms that leading a simple life within the family environment is the initial foundation for developing a child's character, one that is resilient against the temptations of a materialistic lifestyle (M.Pd.I, 2020). Meanwhile, Tilaar (2002) states that effective character education is instilled through concrete examples, not just lectures or verbal advice (Tilaar, 2002).

Thus, parental role models in simplicity are not only a social practice, but also a strong pedagogical strategy in protecting teenagers from the increasingly massive influence of hedonistic culture through the media and social environment.

Internalization of Spiritual Values and Habituation of Positive Behavior

Field research in Metro City shows that developing children's character to resist the influence of a hedonistic lifestyle is effectively achieved through two main approaches: internalizing spiritual values and habituating positive behaviors from an early age. These two approaches complement each other in instilling strong moral and spiritual values in children.

Spiritual values are instilled through the practice of worship, deepening the meaning of religious teachings, and direct role models from parents. Children are not only guided to perform formal religious practices such as prayer and reciting dua, but also encouraged to understand the meaning behind these practices, such as the values of gratitude, simplicity, responsibility, and honesty. This process takes place in a warm, dialogical, and reflective family atmosphere. One informant, Mr. Fikri, explained:

"Every morning, I wake my children up myself. I make sure they pray the morning prayer, recite their prayers, and prepare their school supplies. Furthermore, I always remind them to be polite to their teachers and friends, as I believe that is a life skill more important than academic grades. I believe that if children are accustomed to living in an orderly manner and respecting others from a young age, they will grow into strong individuals." (Mr. Fikri, personal communication, March 12, 2025)

Spiritual practices are not separated from daily life but form the foundation of routines that teach children to live orderly and develop self-awareness of good values. Beyond spiritual aspects, cultivating positive behaviors is also a crucial strategy. Parents should accustom their children to living orderly, polite, frugal, and responsible lives.

"At home, we always teach our children that education isn't just about being smart or memorizing lessons, but also about being a good person. We often tell them not to buy expensive things just because they want to look cool like their friends. Think about it first: is it really necessary or just a whim? We also teach them to appreciate the process. It's okay to start from scratch, the important thing is to put in the effort. There's no need to rush to appear successful, but learn to work hard and be patient first." (Mrs. Ami, personal communication, February 24, 2025).

A teenager named Bela revealed that she had been accustomed to living simply and with gratitude since childhood. According to her, this upbringing prevented her from being easily tempted by the consumerist trends prevalent among teenagers. This demonstrates the success of an approach that emphasizes strengthening values through habituation and internalization, rather than simply prohibitions or punishments.

"Since childhood, I've been reminded to be grateful and not to envy what others have. My mother said that everyone's fortune comes differently, so don't compare. From a young age, I was taught to live modestly, not to be wasteful, and not to be easily tempted to buy things. Now, I feel like those values have really helped me in life, especially at school and on social media, where many people show off their possessions. But I'm not easily tempted because I know what's important and what's just showing off" (Bela, personal communication, February 11, 2025).

From an Islamic educational perspective, this strategy aligns with the principles of ta'dib and tarbiyah, an educational process that holistically instills Islamic values, involving spiritual, moral, and social aspects. Character education based on Islamic values places morality and spirituality at the core of a child's personality development, with parents as the primary guides (Al-Hawary et al., 2023). Active parental involvement in creating a home environment conducive to instilling spiritual values, such as through learning assistance, moral dialogue, and role models, is highly effective in preventing consumer behavior and building resilient character in children (Hyoscyamina, 2017).

Similarly, Eryandi (2023) highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic values into the family's daily routine. The values of faith, ihsan, and responsibility can be gradually instilled through small, meaningful habits, such as reminding each other to pray, discussing the wisdom of life, and maintaining politeness towards others. This reinforces the point that spiritual education does not stop at the cognitive dimension but is integrated with the affective and behavioral dimensions of children (Eryandi, 2023).

From another empirical perspective, it shows that the role of parents as the primary agents of spiritual education within the family is crucial in the internalization of Islamic values that shape children's character. Children who grow up in a family environment that reinforces religious and moral values tend to be psychologically stronger in facing negative external influences, including a hedonistic lifestyle (Yust, 2019).

Thus, internalizing spiritual values and habituating positive behaviors is a preventive and constructive strategy for developing children's anti-hedonistic character. Children avoid consumer behavior not only out of fear of reprimand, but also because they possess a strong sense of value, moral conviction, and spiritual identity. This process must begin early and continue consistently within the family, as the family is the first and foremost school for character education.

Supervision of Social Interactions

In addition to role models, internalizing spiritual values, and cultivating positive behaviors, research in Metro City indicates that parental supervision of children's social interactions is a strategic component in preventing the influence of a hedonistic lifestyle. In this context, supervision is not carried out in a repressive manner, but rather in a balanced manner, combining control and trust. This approach aims to ensure that children's autonomy is respected while remaining within the family's moral and spiritual values.

Mrs. Ami, one of the research informants, explained that she always takes the time to talk with her child about friends at school, after-school activities, and social media activities. She recognizes that overly strict supervision can lead to resistance, but neglect can also lead to a child losing direction.

"I don't want to be too controlling, because I know if I'm too strict, he could rebel. But I also can't let go completely. So I engage in casual conversations with him, ask him who his friends are, what they're playing, and give him guidance without being patronizing. I want him to feel confident in me, but also to know that I'm still monitoring him. Sometimes I check his social media, but not by getting angry, just by providing understanding. I believe supervision is important, but it must be done in a way that makes the child feel valued," (Mrs. Fitri, [personal communication, February 22, 2025](#)).

This form of supervision emphasizes open communication and a persuasive approach, aimed at fostering internal awareness in children. Parents act as companions who are sensitive to changes in their child's social behavior and the development of their social environment. When children feel trusted, they tend to be more open about problems or social pressures they experience, including the temptations of a luxurious lifestyle prevalent among peers and on social media.

From an Islamic educational perspective, supervision within the family is an integral part of the concept *ri'āyah* (maintenance), as described in the words of the Prophet SAW: *"Each of you is a leader, and every leader will be asked about those he leads."* (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). Parents as leaders in the household are responsible for protecting their children from destructive environmental influences, including a hedonistic lifestyle that can erode spiritual and moral values.

"My parents never forbade me from hanging out with anyone without a reason. But they always reminded me in a subtle way, like saying, 'Choose friends who

make you a better person, okay?' They often advised me not to get carried away by an environment that only cared about lifestyle or status. They said that what was important was having a good heart and being able to do good for others, not about being famous or having expensive things" (Philo, [personal communication, February 20, 2025](#)).

Several teenagers in this study reported feeling comfortable when their parents were involved in their social lives without being intimidating. Bela, one of the teenage participants, stated that she actually felt safer and more protected because her mother always knew who her friends were and occasionally monitored her social media activity. This suggests that empathetic supervision can strengthen the emotional bond between children and parents and encourage children to think critically about negative influences from their social environment.

Effective parental supervision is conducted through a relational and educational approach, not just instructional. This type of supervision fosters a climate of trust, where children feel they have a place to confide and receive non-judgmental moral guidance ([Ying et al., 2015](#)). Similarly, ([Pan et al., 2024](#)) noted that an integrative supervision strategy can strengthen adolescents' moral resilience against the pressures of a widespread materialistic lifestyle in the digital age.

Thus, parental social supervision is not merely an effort to monitor children's social interactions, but rather an integral part of the family's values education process. When supervision is conducted in a dialogue of openness and empathy, children will grow up with an awareness of selecting healthy social environments and avoiding hedonistic lifestyles. This strengthens the family's role as the primary bulwark in children's character and spiritual development amidst ever-evolving sociocultural challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the crucial role of parents in instilling anti-hedonistic values in adolescents, particularly amidst the increasingly widespread consumer culture of the digital age. Three main approaches identified in this study are: leading by example in living simply, internalizing spiritual values and cultivating positive behaviors, and monitoring social interactions. Parents' exemplary practices in adopting a frugal and modest lifestyle serve as the initial foundation for character development in children. Meanwhile, consistently practicing religious practices and reinforcing moral values foster a strong spiritual awareness in children, beyond simply following formal rules.

Furthermore, social supervision conducted in a dialogical and empathetic manner strengthens the emotional bond between parents and children, so that children feel valued and protected. These three approaches reflect the strategic role of the family as the primary institution in adolescent character development. Based on Islamic values such as contentment (*qana'ah*), asceticism (*zuhud*), *ta'dib* (religious commitment), and *ri'ayah* (religious discipline), parents can be the primary bulwark in shaping adolescents who are

not easily tempted by a hedonistic lifestyle and possess strong spiritual and moral integrity amidst ever-evolving sociocultural challenges.

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