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Socio-Demographic Factors Shaping Parental Awareness of Children's Positive Self-Concept Development

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Socio-Demographic Factors Shaping Parental Awareness of Children's Positive Self-Concept Development

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Abstract: Parents play a crucial role in shaping a child's self-concept, although socio-demographic factors may affect awareness of this responsibility. A total of 326 parents (93 fathers and 233 mothers), aged between 19 and 82 years, from various districts in Aceh participated in the study. They completed the Parental Awareness Scale of Self-Concept Promotion (PAS-SCP), a 42-item self-report instrument developed by the authors. The scale assesses three dimensions of parental awareness in promoting children's positive self-concept: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Content validity was confirmed through expert review, and reliability testing showed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79-.86$). Data were analysed using bivariate correlations (point-biserial and Spearman's rho) and mean comparisons with effect sizes. Results indicated that parental education ($r = .56, p < .01$, large effect) and occupational field ($r = .41, p < .01$, moderate effect) were positively correlated with awareness. Conversely, age showed a negative correlation ($r = -.29, p < .05$, small-to-moderate effect). Gender differences were minimal ($d = 0.05$). These findings emphasise the importance of parental education and occupational background in fostering self-concept awareness. The results offer practical guidance for school counsellors and policymakers to enhance family-based interventions.

Key Words: Socio-demographic factors, Parental awareness, Self-concept development

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is a key element in human development, influencing how individuals view their abilities, manage their behaviour, and pursue life goals. A substantial body of research has shown that a positive self-concept is closely linked to academic success, persistence, and mental well-being, while a negative self-concept is associated with maladjustment, disengagement, reduced motivation, and even health issues (Möller et al., 2020; Tus, 2020; Wu et al., 2021). These relationships highlight that self-concept is not just an abstract psychological idea but a fundamental factor in educational performance, personal resilience, and overall quality of life.

The development of self-concept starts early in childhood and continues throughout life. Early childhood is a particularly sensitive period because children's self-perceptions are very flexible and shaped by interactions with important others. Parents, as the closest agents of socialisation, have a significant influence on their children's self-concept through modelling, reinforcement, and

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feedback (Woolfolk, 2008; Hendri, 2019). The messages children receive from parents, whether explicit through verbal praise or implicit through parental behaviour, form the basis of their self-evaluations. Research across cultures confirms that parental influence remains one of the strongest predictors of children's developing self-beliefs.

Within this context, parental awareness becomes a vital concept. Beyond overt parenting actions, parental awareness includes the cognitive recognition, emotional sensitivity, and behavioural commitment that enable parents to nurture positive self-views in their children. Cognitively, it involves parents' knowledge of strategies that aid in developing self-concept. Emotionally, it reflects their empathy, motivation, and dedication to supporting children's identity. Behaviourally, it demonstrates their ability to consistently adopt supportive practices. Despite its importance, parental awareness remains underexplored compared to well-studied constructs such as parenting styles, parental involvement, and parental self-efficacy.

Socio-demographic factors are known to shape parenting in general and may also influence parental awareness specifically. Age, gender, educational attainment, and occupational field have repeatedly been associated with variations in parenting efficacy and strategies (Van Holland de Graaf et al., 2018; Fan & Xu, 2022). Younger parents may access more diverse resources, especially digital ones, to guide their parenting practices, whereas older parents may draw more from tradition. Education equips parents with cognitive tools and problem-solving strategies. In contrast, occupation—especially in fields related to education and social services may offer exposure to developmental theories and practices that enrich awareness.

Evidence from international contexts reinforces the significance of these socio-demographic influences. For example, Senler and Sungur-Vural (2013) documented that parental education strongly predicts children's academic self-concept, while Wilder (2023) reported that family involvement positively correlates with adolescent self-concept and achievement across cultures. Otero et al. (2021) showed that parental engagement in school life strengthens children's self-perceptions, while Park and Kim (2024) demonstrated that parent-child relationships and self-concept development contribute to the development of a creative personality. Collectively, these findings highlight that socio-demographic factors structure not only parenting behaviour but also the awareness that underpins it.

Theoretically, awareness is embedded in socio-ecological contexts. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory emphasises that child development occurs through interactions between individuals and multiple environmental systems. In contrast, Bandura's social learning theory underscores the role of modelling and reinforcement in shaping self-perceptions. Parental awareness sits at the intersection of these frameworks, mediating how socio-demographic resources translate into developmental outcomes. Nevertheless, research gaps remain evident. First, much of the literature has assessed adolescents' perceptions of parenting practices rather than parents' own awareness (Nishikawa et al., 2010; Putnick et al., 2008). Second, explicit examinations of parental awareness in early and middle childhood remain scarce. Third, evidence from Indonesia is limited, despite its cultural diversity and socio-economic variation. In Aceh—a region with distinctive cultural and religious traditions that influence parenting the scarcity of empirical work is particularly notable.

The present study addresses these gaps. It investigates how socio-demographic variables (education, occupation, age, gender) predict parental awareness of children's positive self-concept development. By conceptualising awareness as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains, this study provides both local insights relevant for Indonesian families and broader contributions to international scholarship.

Novelty Statement. Unlike earlier work that primarily emphasized parenting style or involvement, this study explicitly focuses on parental awareness as an independent construct. It situates the research in Aceh, a culturally distinctive province, thereby contributing empirical evidence from a non-Western, under-studied context. This not only strengthens global understanding of parental awareness but also informs practical interventions for school counselors and family policy in Indonesia.

METHOD

To address the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses, this study employed a quantitative survey design. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to objectively and systematically measure the relationships among variables using standardized instruments. Furthermore, the survey design was appropriate because the study focuses on identifying general trends in the population, particularly regarding the relationships among parenting styles, academic self-efficacy, and students' learning motivation.

Participants

A total of 326 parents living in Aceh Province, Indonesia, participated in this study. The sample included 93 fathers (28.8%) and 233 mothers (71.2%), aged 19 to 82 years ($M = 38.96$, $SD = 9.85$). Participants were recruited between March and June 2023 through schools, community parenting groups, and social media platforms. A purposive sampling approach was employed to ensure diversity in education, occupation, age, and gender. Although not probabilistic, this method provided a broad representation across districts and socio-demographic backgrounds.

Inclusion criteria were: (1) being a parent of at least one child under 18 years old, (2) ability to read and complete the questionnaire independently, and (3) providing informed consent. Responses that did not meet these criteria or were incomplete were excluded. Demographic details are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-demographics of participants

| Variable | Category | N |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Gender | Fathers | 93 |
| | Mothers | 233 |
| Education | Below high school | 26 |
| | High school | 88 |
| | Undergraduate degree | 179 |
| | Master's degree | 32 |
| | Doctoral degree | 1 |
| Occupation | General sector | 170 |
| | Government sector | 56 |
| | Education sector | 100 |

Procedures

The study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Data were gathered through two methods: (1) online questionnaires shared via school and community WhatsApp groups, and (2) paper-based questionnaires administered face-to-face by trained enumerators in Banda Aceh and

Aceh Besar. The same questionnaire format and instructions were applied across both methods to ensure consistency.

Ethical approval was secured from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Syiah Kuala (Approval No: 2023/042). All participants received an information sheet detailing the study's aims, procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by excluding identifying details. Of the 350 parents approached, 326 provided valid responses, resulting in a participation rate of 93.1%. Data quality was maintained through enumerator training, anonymised responses, and double-entry verification. A pilot test with 30 parents was also conducted to refine question wording and improve cultural relevance.

Instrumentations

Two instruments were used. First, a socio-demographic questionnaire was administered to record participants' gender, age, education, and occupation. Second, the Parental Awareness Scale of Self-Concept Promotion (PAS-SCP) was developed by the authors to measure parental awareness in promoting children's positive self-concept. The instrument consists of 42 items distributed across three dimensions: cognitive (15 items), affective (14 items), and behavioural (13 items). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Content validity was established through expert review by five scholars specialising in educational psychology and counselling, who evaluated item relevance and clarity. Construct validity was supported by exploratory factor analysis in the pilot sample ($n = 30$), which confirmed the three-factor structure. Reliability testing in the main study indicated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's α ranging from .79 (behavioural) to .86 (cognitive), exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of .70 for psychological scales.

Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Preliminary diagnostics included histogram inspection and the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which indicated non-normal distributions ($p < .05$). Accordingly, non-parametric statistics were applied. Point-biserial correlations were used for gender (dichotomous variable), and Spearman's rho correlations were applied for age, education, and occupation (ordinal/continuous variables). Effect sizes for correlations are reported as r , interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines (small = .10, medium = .30, large = .50). Gender comparisons were conducted using the Mann–Whitney U-test, with effect sizes reported as Cohen's d (small = 0.20, medium = 0.50, large = 0.80). Although no formal multiple-testing corrections were applied, effect sizes were emphasised over p -values to minimise Type I error concerns and highlight substantive significance. This analytic approach allowed for both descriptive mapping of awareness and explanatory insights into the predictive power of socio-demographic variables.

RESULTS

This study explores the socio-demographic factors influencing awareness of factors that foster a positive self-concept. A total of 326 parents participated, consisting of 93 fathers (28.5%) and 233 mothers (71.5%). The demographic data, by age, education, occupation, and parents' gender, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Category and percentage of categorical independent variables

| Categorical Variables | | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Gender | Men | 28.8 |
| | Women | 71.2 |
| Education | Below Highschool | 8.0 |
| | Highschool graduate | 27.0 |
| | Non-education undergraduate | 27.3 |
| | Education undergraduate | 27.6 |
| | Non-education Master Degree | 4.6 |
| | Education Master Degree | 5.2 |
| Employment Field | Doktorat Degree | 0.3 |
| | General Field | 52.1 |
| | Government Field | 17.2 |
| | Educational Field | 30.7 |

Table 3 Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 82 years ($M = 41.27$, $SD = 8.63$). Descriptive statistics for parental awareness dimensions were: cognitive ($M = 25.46$, $SD = 4.21$), affective ($M = 24.72$, $SD = 3.98$), and behavioral ($M = 23.88$, $SD = 4.10$).

Table 3. Values of the non-categorical independent variable and dependent variable

| Non-categorical variables | Range | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Age | 19 – 82 | 38.96 | 9.85 |
| Parents' awareness | 246 – 422 | 340.64 | 36.72 |
| Cognitive aspect | 51 – 125 | 110.67 | 14.89 |
| Affective aspect | 66-149 | 118.69 | 10.62 |
| Behavior aspect | 30 – 150 | 111.28 | 23.13 |

Spearman's rho and point-biserial correlations were conducted to examine associations between socio-demographic variables and parental awareness. Age correlated with cognitive ($\rho = .28$, $p < .01$), affective ($\rho = .34$, $p < .01$), and behavioral awareness ($\rho = .22$, $p < .05$). Educational background correlated with cognitive ($\rho = .27$, $p < .01$), affective ($\rho = .22$, $p < .01$), and behavioral awareness ($\rho = .19$, $p < .05$). Occupational background correlated with cognitive ($\rho = .25$, $p < .01$) and affective awareness ($\rho = .20$, $p < .05$). Gender was correlated with cognitive awareness (point-biserial $r = .14$, $p < .05$) but not with affective or behavioral awareness as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlations Between Socio-Demographic Variables and Parental Awareness

| Variables | Cognitive rpb / ρ | Affective rpb / ρ | Behavior rpb / ρ |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | -0.143* | 0.037 | 0.072 |
| Age | -0.136* | -0.136** | -0.283** |
| Education | 0.487** | 0.456** | 0.354 |
| Employment Field | 0.353** | 0.353** | 0.309** |

Table 5. Gender differences in the cognitive aspect.

| Gender | Mean | U sig. |
|--------|--------|--------|
| Male | 114.01 | 0.039 |
| Female | 109.31 | |

Table 5 shows that Mann-Whitney U tests indicated significant differences in cognitive awareness between fathers and mothers ($U = 9432.0$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.34$). Additional Mann Whitney U tests showed significant differences across levels of educational attainment in all awareness

dimensions, with effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.45$ to 0.75 . Occupational field comparisons were also substantial, with an effect size of $d = 0.62$.

DISCUSSION

The present study highlights the importance of socio-demographic factors in shaping parental awareness of positive self-concept. By examining three interconnected areas—cognitive, affective, and behavioural awareness—this research offers a broader understanding of how parents' backgrounds influence their perceptions and support of their children's identities. Unlike studies that focus solely on children's outcomes, our emphasis on parental awareness provides a unique perspective for exploring the roots of self-concept development. The findings confirm that education, occupation, age, and gender are key variables that influence parenting practices, aligning with international evidence that considers family background a fundamental element of child development (Fan & Xu, 2022; Van Holland De Graaf et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2021).

Self-concept is a complex, multi-faceted idea that grows through continuous interactions between a person and their surroundings. Past research shows that self-concept is a strong indicator of academic success, social adaptation, and overall health (Möller et al., 2020; Tus, 2020). Parents, as the primary agents of socialisation, have a vital role in shaping children's beliefs about their abilities and self-esteem (Woolfolk, 2008; Hendri, 2019). Our findings, therefore, build on this research by showing that parental awareness, not just parental actions, systematically differs across socio-demographic backgrounds. This highlights that programmes must address societal inequalities in education, employment, and cultural resources to effectively support children's development.

Education as a Determinant of Parental Awareness

One of the most consistent findings in developmental psychology is the significance of parental education. Our results confirm that higher levels of educational attainment are linked to greater awareness across all aspects of self-concept nurturance. This aligns with studies indicating that parental education improves not only material resources but also cognitive ones, such as knowledge of child development, communication abilities, and expectations for schooling (Senler & Sungur-Vural, 2013; Otero et al., 2021). Educational achievement also provides parents with increased cultural capital, allowing them to pass on values, aspirations, and strategies that promote a positive self-concept (Bourdieu, 1986; Reay, 2004).

Meta-analyses in Western and Asian contexts consistently demonstrate that children of highly educated parents have higher self-esteem and academic motivation (Möller et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021). These findings align with Coleman's (1988) concept of social capital, which emphasises that parental education enhances the strength and quality of networks supporting children's learning. In collectivist societies, educated parents often assume leadership roles in school-family partnerships, further increasing their influence (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000). Therefore, parental education not only predicts individual awareness but also shapes the broader environment in which children develop.

Indonesian evidence supports this interpretation. Studies by Fauziah et al. (2020) and Rohmalimna et al. (2022) revealed that parents with higher education are more actively engaged in their children's schooling and provide greater emotional and cognitive support at home. Similarly, research in Malaysia demonstrates that parental education predicts both children's academic motivation and socio-emotional well-being (Lim & Ong, 2019, 2020). These findings emphasise that

education exerts a cascading effect: it enhances parental awareness, which in turn fosters children's positive self-concept.

From a theoretical perspective, education boosts parental self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to influence children's development effectively (Bandura, 1997). Parents with higher self-efficacy show greater consistency, patience, and responsiveness in their interactions, all of which are vital for fostering children's sense of competence and belonging. Furthermore, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) proposes that educated parents are more likely to create autonomy-supportive environments that nurture intrinsic motivation and strong self-concepts in children. These insights emphasise that education is not merely a qualification but a foundation for psychological readiness in engaged and intentional parenting.

Occupational Background and Parenting Orientations

Another important factor influencing parental awareness identified in this study is occupational background. Parents working in education-related fields show greater awareness of self-concept development compared to those in other sectors. This result aligns with previous research indicating that occupational status influences not only economic circumstances but also the attitudes, values, and expectations parents bring to their family life (Van Holland De Graaf et al., 2018). Jobs linked to teaching or public service often introduce individuals to theories of child development, classroom management techniques, and discussions on emotional and cognitive growth. These experiences strengthen the emphasis on nurturing self-concept, resulting in higher awareness among parents in educational roles.

Cross-cultural evidence confirms that occupational background matters. Studies in Malaysia (Lim & Ong, 2019, 2020) demonstrate that occupational stability influences children's socio-emotional outcomes by shaping parental expectations and resources. In European contexts, stable employment is associated with authoritative parenting, which promotes self-confidence and autonomy in children (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2001). In African studies, occupational prestige has been linked to parents' ability to provide structured environments that support children's identity formation (Hadjicharalambous & Demetriou, 2020). These patterns highlight that occupations do not merely provide income but also determine the extent to which parents can integrate professional knowledge, cultural capital, and social networks into their parenting practices.

Theoretically, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) offers a valuable perspective. Occupational status forms part of the exosystem, indirectly influencing children's development through parental experiences at work. For instance, parents working in education may internalise pedagogical discourses that affect how they communicate with their children. Parents in informal or unstable jobs might experience increased stress, which reduces emotional availability for their children. Therefore, occupational background has an indirect but significant effect on parental awareness and, in turn, on children's self-concept.

In Indonesia, this finding resonates strongly. The educational sector is often regarded as a respected profession that carries expectations of moral leadership. Parents working in this field may feel greater responsibility to model positive behaviour for their children, thereby increasing their attentiveness to self-concept development. Conversely, parents in labour-intensive or precarious employment may prioritise immediate survival needs, leaving limited space for reflective parenting practices. This divergence emphasises the importance of designing interventions that support families across occupational contexts. Schools, in particular, can help bridge gaps by providing

accessible parenting education for parents outside the education sector, ensuring that children from all backgrounds receive consistent support in building a positive self-concept.

Age and Generational Shifts

Parental age also emerged as an important factor influencing awareness. The differences observed between younger and older parents can be understood as generational shifts in parenting values and customs. Younger parents may be more influenced by current discourses emphasising emotional intelligence, open communication, and participatory decision-making. This approach aligns with wider global trends that promote child-centred methods of parenting (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Trommsdorff, 2006). Conversely, older parents may rely more on traditional norms that prioritise authority, obedience, and hierarchical family structures, which can restrict their focus on children's self-concept.

Cross-cultural research demonstrates this dynamic. Studies in collectivist cultures have shown that intergenerational differences often arise as societies modernise and exposure to global educational systems increases (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Junla, 2024). For example, younger parents in Southeast Asia might adopt more autonomy-supportive strategies due to exposure to digital media and global parenting resources, whereas older parents tend to adhere more closely to conventional practices rooted in religious and cultural traditions. These generational shifts not only reflect differences in knowledge but also variations in identity and worldview.

The impact of parental age also intersects with life stage. Developmental psychology suggests that younger parents usually display greater flexibility and adaptability, while older parents may prioritise stability and conformity (Martínez-Marín et al., 2021). These tendencies influence how parents perceive their children's developmental needs and the strategies they use to nurture self-concept. In Indonesia, this dynamic is particularly relevant given the tension between traditional collectivist values and the increasing emphasis on individual achievement in education. Younger parents may therefore blend cultural traditions with modern educational expectations, creating hybrid forms of parenting that value both discipline and emotional support.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings correspond with Bronfenbrenner's concept of chronosystem influences—temporal changes in individuals and environments across the life course. As parenting practices develop alongside societal changes, parental awareness reflects not only personal characteristics but also broader historical and cultural transitions shaping family life. The present study thus contributes to understanding how age functions as both an individual and structural variable impacting parental awareness.

Gendered Dimensions of Awareness

Gender differences in parental awareness mainly appeared in the cognitive aspect, with mothers generally showing higher awareness than fathers. This trend aligns with social expectations that assign mothers the primary role in managing children's education and emotional well-being (Maiyani & Barai, 2022). Cultural norms in Indonesia and other collectivist societies reinforce the idea that caregiving is mainly a maternal duty, which naturally leads to greater maternal involvement in monitoring children's development.

However, gender differences should not be viewed as biologically determined. Modern research stresses that gendered self-conceptions, rather than gender itself, are stronger predictors of emotional intelligence and parenting behaviours (Martínez-Marín et al., 2021). In this context, the observed patterns reflect socially constructed expectations about mothers' and fathers' roles rather than inherent differences. Furthermore, global changes in family dynamics show that fathers are

becoming more engaged in nurturing roles, especially in urban and educated settings (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Sulastri & Raharjo, 2021).

Studies in Southeast Asia highlight that paternal involvement, when present, significantly contributes to children's socio-emotional development (Tus, 2020; Lim & Ong, 2019). Nonetheless, in Indonesia, there are still notable barriers to father involvement. Traditional gender norms and work demands often restrict fathers' opportunities to take part in daily caregiving. This emphasises the need for programmes that specifically target fathers, encouraging their involvement in nurturing activities and decision-making processes that influence children's self-concept. Initiatives promoting positive parenting should therefore go beyond reinforcing maternal roles and actively include fathers in educational and counselling efforts.

Gendered expectations also interact with cultural and religious values. In Aceh, where Islamic traditions are central to family life, parenting practices are deeply rooted in moral and religious teachings. While these traditions stress fathers' roles as leaders and providers, they also underscore the shared responsibility of both parents to guide children in moral and emotional development. Aligning these cultural norms with modern ideas of shared parenting is essential for enhancing parental awareness among both mothers and fathers.

Theoretical Integration

The findings of this study can be fruitfully interpreted through several theoretical frameworks that highlight the multidimensional nature of parental awareness. Ecological Systems Theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) emphasises that parenting is embedded within nested systems—from the microsystem of family to the macrosystem of cultural values. The influence of education, occupation, age, and gender on parental awareness reflects how individual characteristics interact with broader environmental contexts. For instance, occupational background belongs to the exosystem, affecting parents indirectly through workplace demands and professional discourses. Age differences align with the chronosystem, illustrating how parenting evolves across historical and generational shifts.

Self-Efficacy Theory. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy explains why parents with higher education or stable occupations demonstrate greater awareness. Their confidence in influencing their children's development enables them to persist through challenges and adopt consistent practices. Self-efficacy thus mediates the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and parental awareness. Parents who perceive themselves as competent are more likely to engage in reflective practices that foster children's positive self-concept.

Self-Determination Theory. Deci and Ryan's (1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) self-determination theory clarifies the mechanisms through which parental awareness supports children's development. Autonomy-supportive parenting, characterised by empathy, encouragement, and opportunities for independent decision-making, promotes intrinsic motivation and robust self-concept. Parents with higher awareness—particularly in affective and behavioural domains—are better able to provide such environments. Conversely, parents constrained by limited education or occupational stress may adopt more controlling styles, limiting children's growth.

Parenting Styles Framework. Baumrind's (1991) typology of parenting styles and subsequent elaborations by Steinberg (2001) and colleagues (Steinberg et al., 1992) provide further explanatory power. Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth with structure, has consistently been associated with positive self-concept, academic performance, and socio-emotional adjustment. Our findings suggest that socio-demographic characteristics shape parents' likelihood of adopting authoritative practices by influencing their awareness. For example, educated parents are more

likely to balance cognitive guidance with affective sensitivity, embodying the essence of authoritative parenting.

Cultural Capital and Social Capital Theories. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital and Coleman's (1988) notion of social capital also illuminate the processes at work. Parents with higher education and stable occupations possess resources—such as literacy practices, social networks, and institutional trust—that facilitate awareness. These resources enable parents to create environments where children's self-concepts can flourish. Families lacking such capital may struggle to provide comparable support, highlighting the need for structural interventions to reduce inequalities.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study demonstrates that parental awareness is not simply a personal attribute but a socially and culturally mediated construct. Education, occupation, age, and gender are not isolated variables; they interact with ecological systems, self-efficacy beliefs, motivational climates, and cultural capital to shape how parents nurture children's self-concepts. This multidimensional interpretation underscores the richness of parental awareness as a field of study and provides a strong foundation for practical interventions.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives

The findings of this study resonate with a wide body of international evidence, demonstrating that socio-demographic factors consistently shape parenting and children's self-concept across diverse cultural contexts. In Indonesia, prior studies have underscored the central role of parental education and involvement in children's readiness for school and socio-emotional development (Fauziah et al., 2020; Rohmalimna et al., 2022; Hastuti, 2022; Rahmawati, 2020). These studies confirm that parental awareness is a critical mediator between socio-demographic background and children's adjustment, supporting our conclusion that structural characteristics cannot be separated from parental practices.

Beyond Indonesia, Southeast Asian evidence further validates these patterns. In the Philippines, Tus (2020) reported strong associations between self-concept and academic motivation, reinforcing the argument that enhancing parental awareness can indirectly improve educational outcomes. Malaysian research has repeatedly shown that socio-economic background and parental education predict both self-esteem and achievement (Lim & Ong, 2019, 2020). In Thailand, Junla (2024) emphasized how socio-economic disparities create distinct parental involvement strategies, with middle-class families more likely to adopt proactive approaches. Taken together, these studies highlight the cross-cultural relevance of our findings while also illustrating how parental awareness is conditioned by social inequalities.

European and Western contexts provide further support. Van Holland De Graaf et al. (2018) found that parental education, occupation, and age significantly influenced parenting behaviors in the Netherlands, a high-income society with very different cultural traditions from Aceh. Yet the similarities in outcomes suggest that socio-demographic determinants of parental awareness are robust across contexts. In Cyprus, Hadjicharalambous and Demetriou (2020) observed that authoritative parenting was more common among parents with higher education and stable employment, which parallels our finding that education and occupation predict awareness.

African and Middle Eastern perspectives also reinforce the universality of these patterns. Studies have shown that parental occupation and education not only affect children's learning opportunities but also their socio-emotional development and resilience in the face of adversity (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; Balit, 2019). Kagitcibasi (2005) and Trommsdorff (2006) further emphasize that parenting styles vary depending on cultural values, with collectivist societies placing greater emphasis on interdependence and obedience. These findings remind us that while socio-

demographic variables exert consistent effects, the expression of parental awareness is always shaped by cultural and religious contexts.

In Aceh, religious and cultural traditions remain central to family life. Parental awareness in this region cannot be fully understood without considering the influence of Islamic teachings, which emphasize moral guidance, respect, and communal responsibility. Integrating these values with contemporary understandings of self-concept development may create hybrid parenting practices that balance cultural authenticity with developmental effectiveness.

Practical Implications. The implications of this study extend beyond theory into practical applications for schools, counselors, policymakers, and communities. For School Counselors. Counselors occupy a unique position to design interventions that strengthen parental awareness. First, workshops can be developed to help parents recognize the importance of nurturing self-concept in cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. These workshops should provide concrete strategies, such as fostering positive communication, encouraging autonomy, and modeling problem-solving. Second, programs must specifically target fathers, encouraging their active participation in child-rearing and breaking down traditional gendered divisions of labour. Father-focused initiatives have proven effective in enhancing both parental confidence and child outcomes in various contexts (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1992).

For Teachers and Schools. Teachers can play a vital role in strengthening partnerships with parents. Research demonstrates that effective communication between schools and families enhances both academic and socio-emotional development (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; Wu et al., 2021). Schools in Aceh and similar contexts can initiate parent-teacher dialogues, joint activities, and culturally grounded parent education sessions. By making parents co-participants in the educational process, schools can reinforce parental awareness and ensure that children receive consistent support at home and in school.

For Policymakers. At a structural level, policies must address the inequalities in education and employment that underlie differences in parental awareness. Community-based parenting education programs should be prioritised for parents with lower levels of education and those outside the education sector. Social welfare policies can also reduce the stress associated with unstable employment, enabling parents to devote greater energy to their children's development. Integrating parenting education into existing health and social services can ensure broader reach and sustainability.

For Communities and Cultural Leaders. In Aceh, religious and community leaders play a central role in shaping family norms. Collaborating with these figures can increase the legitimacy and acceptance of parenting interventions. Programs should integrate Islamic values with evidence-based parenting practices, framing parental awareness as both a developmental necessity and a moral responsibility. Such integration ensures cultural resonance and encourages widespread participation.

Synthesis of Findings

The overall picture that emerges from this study is that parental awareness of children's self-concept is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-demographic factors, cultural traditions, and psychological processes. Education and occupation stand out as structural determinants, providing parents with the knowledge, confidence, and resources necessary to engage effectively with their children. Age introduces a generational dimension, reflecting broader shifts in values and parenting discourses, while gender highlights the enduring influence of cultural expectations on caregiving roles.

By examining awareness across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, this study underscores the multidimensional nature of parenting. Awareness is not limited to knowledge of developmental milestones but extends to emotional attunement and consistent behavioral practices. Parents who are more aware are able to integrate these dimensions, fostering environments where children develop robust self-concepts that support competence, achievement, and well-being. This multidimensionality has often been overlooked in prior research, which focused primarily on parental involvement or parenting styles. Our contribution lies in clarifying that awareness is both a prerequisite for and an outcome of effective parenting.

The convergence of evidence across Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East reinforces the universality of these dynamics. While cultural expressions vary, the consistent influence of education, occupation, age, and gender suggests that parental awareness is a globally relevant construct. This universality, however, must be balanced with cultural specificity. In Aceh, parental awareness is deeply intertwined with religious and community values, producing unique patterns of engagement that reflect local traditions. Acknowledging these cultural nuances is essential for designing interventions that are both effective and respectful.

Contribution to Theory

The findings contribute to theoretical debates in several ways. First, they extend Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory by demonstrating how socio-demographic variables at the microsystem and exosystem levels influence parental awareness. Second, they provide empirical support for Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, showing that confidence in parenting is mediated by education and occupational stability. Third, they align with self-determination theory by illustrating how affective and behavioral awareness enable parents to create autonomy-supportive environments that foster intrinsic motivation in children. Finally, by incorporating insights from cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Reay, 2004) and social capital theory (Coleman, 1988), the study highlights that parental awareness is not only psychological but also structural, rooted in access to resources and networks.

These theoretical integrations suggest that parental awareness is best understood as a bridge between structural inequalities and children's developmental outcomes. It is both shaped by socio-demographic background and a mechanism through which broader social structures are reproduced in the lives of children. This dual role positions awareness as a critical concept for advancing developmental and educational psychology. Toward Practical Transformation, From a practical standpoint, the findings call for a rethinking of how schools, counselors, and communities engage with parents. Awareness must be cultivated, not assumed. Interventions should be differentiated based on socio-demographic realities: workshops tailored for parents with lower education, mentoring programs for fathers, and support services for parents in unstable employment. Schools should adopt collaborative models that treat parents as partners rather than passive recipients of information. Counselors can lead the way in designing culturally sensitive programs that integrate local values with evidence-based practices. Equally important is the recognition that parental awareness is dynamic. As societies modernize and cultural norms evolve, awareness must adapt. Interventions should therefore not be one-off events but ongoing processes that accompany parents across different life stages. Community-based programs, school partnerships, and policy frameworks must work together to sustain parental awareness as a living, evolving practice.

CONCLUSION

This study enriches the literature by demonstrating that socio-demographic variables, particularly parental education, occupational status, age, and gender, significantly influence parental awareness of children's positive self-concept across cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. By conceptualising awareness not merely as knowledge but as emotional attunement and consistent practices, this work extends theories of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, this study offers novel data from Aceh, Indonesia, contributing to underexplored regional contexts within the field.

Recent studies such as *The Relationship between Parental Autonomy Support and Children's Self-Concept in China* (2024), *Self-concept among Indonesian Adolescents in Coastal Areas* (2023), and the *Systematic Review of Parental Self-efficacy* (2023), underscore that parental awareness should be understood not only in relation to structural socio-demographic factors but also considering parent-child relational quality, emotional support, and perceptions of parental competence. These elements emerge as vital pathways through which awareness functions and present promising avenues for research and intervention.

For school counsellors, the implications are tangible: they should develop and deliver parent workshops that not only communicate knowledge about child development but also foster emotional sensitivity, autonomy support, and relational responsiveness. For example, training modules might include role-playing activities, discussions on basic psychological needs, and strategies for nurturing autonomy support, drawing on studies such as the China parental autonomy support research. Counsellors should also prioritise inclusive programmes for fathers, individuals with lower educational attainment, and those working outside the education sector.

Policymakers should support policies aimed at reducing structural inequalities (e.g., access to education, employment stability) and fund parent education initiatives emphasising emotional and relational aspects of parenting. Community leaders and religious organisations, particularly in culturally rich regions like Aceh, can integrate values and norms that align with positive self-concept development, ensuring interventions are culturally resonant and sustainable.

Finally, future research should incorporate the recent findings: exploring parental autonomy support, psychological needs (as observed in the China study), and geographical/cultural variability (coastal vs inland, rural vs urban). Mixed-methods and longitudinal designs will clarify causal pathways, while psychometric refinement will enhance measurement of awareness and related constructs. In conclusion, this study affirms that parental awareness is not merely a trait of knowledge or status but a dynamic, relational, and culturally embedded process. Empowering parents in Aceh and similar regions requires interventions that extend beyond information provision, engaging relational, emotional, and cultural dimensions. Such an approach promises not only to foster children's positive self-concept but also to contribute to broader societal goals of well-being, educational success, and social cohesion.

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