# The Effect of Parental Support to Moral Identity on Late Adolescent in Makassar

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine the effect of parental support to moral identity on late adolescents in Makassar. This study used quantitative research method with correlational design. The study sample consisted of 304 late adolescents in Makassar that were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The scale used in this study were Parental Support Scale and Moral Identity Questionnaire that have been adapted by the previous researcher. Data was analyzed by using the simple linear regression analysis. The result of this study showed that there is positive significant influence of parental support to moral identity on late adolescents in Makassar. The effect of parental support to moral identity is 6.4% ( $R^2 = 0.064$ ;  $R^2 = 0.064$ ). As for the 93.6% of moral identity is affected by other factors. Therefore, increasing the parental support level will improve adolescent's moral identity level. Based on the results of this study, parents in Makassar need to improve their support toward adolescents to build positive moral identity of adolescents.

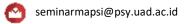
**Keywords:** late adolescent, moral identity, parental support.

# Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period in the human life span (Santrock, 2011). Adolescence is a very vulnerable period because adolescents begin to open themselves up to the social environment outside of home or school. Adolescents may experience a period of crisis characterized by the emergence of deviant behavior. If adolescents are not supported by a conducive environment or mature personality conditions, it will trigger the emergence of deviant behavior (Papalia, Martorell, & Feldman, 2014). Particularly, adolescents who are neglected by their parents, grow up in a family full of conflict, or lack attention have a great risk of becoming delinquent. Papalia, Olds, and Feldman (2009) state that adolescents who are less supervised, guarded, given guidance, and cared for by their parents, especially by the mother, will tend to behave rebelliously or commit actions that deviate from community norms.

Hence, adolescent need moral identity. Moral identity refers to the importance of moral qualities (such as honesty, fairness, generosity) as central to one's sense of self (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Moral identity can also be understood as the way adolescents view and describe themselves in terms of ethics, honesty, caring, opposition to cheating, and commitment to doing the right thing (McManus, 2008). Hart, Atkins, and Ford (1998) compiled a moral identity formation. Moral identity is formed by two factors, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors are formed from aspects of individual personality. Meanwhile, external factors are social influences consisting of family and socio-culture. Moral identity is crucial for adolescent, for it can direct adolescents to perform certain behaviors. Moral identity is more than





just an understanding of the rightness or wrongness, in this case adolescents can recognize themselves better so that they can be attentive to their thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Moral identity will encourage adolescents to act on the basis of moral beliefs and values that are built within themselves and even commit to these beliefs and values (Moshman, 2011).

Powerful commitment to those values will enable adolescents to act on the basis of respect and/or concern for the rights and/or welfare of others (Moshman, 2011). Adolescents with high level of moral identity tend to be more socially responsible. Moreover, moral identity can encourage adolescents to adapt optimally and contribute to the well-being of their environment and community (Patrick, 2009; Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Moral identity enable adolescents feel obliged to have an attitude of helping others (Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Woodbury, & Hickman, 2014). Cui, Mao, Shen, and Ma (2021) show that adolescents with high moral identity will tend to have high sympathy and moral reasoning, as well as have a positive view of humanity and a desire to be a better person. High moral identity can also reduce levels of anxiety and depression. In fact, adolescents tend to be able to avoid alcohol abuse, risky sexual behavior, and high self-esteem (Hardy, et al., 2013). In addition, adolescents with high moral identity tend to feel their lives are more meaningful. Adolescents can see themselves and what they do as contributing to the lives of others (Han, Liauw, & Kuntz, 2019).

On the other hand, there are still reports of adolescent behavior that does not reflect ownership of moral identity. A survey conducted by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in Indonesia showed that in 2019-2021, there was a significant increase of 128.75% in the age group of 16-29 years. In fact, the age of 19 was recorded as the average age of the first time the abuser used drugs (BNN, 2021). Furthermore, in Makassar, the number of juvenile detainees in the Maros Class IIA Correctional Institution (LPKA) has continued to increase since 2018-2020. In fact, the number of juvenile recidivists also increased in 2018 by two people to six people in 2020. In particular, the Head of the Child Development Section at LPKA Maros explained that a very important factor is the approach and supervision carried out by parents towards adolescents. Hence, one of the determining factors to get over these issues is family, that is parental support.

Parental support is one of the parenting dimensions. Parental support is an observable and perceived parental behavior that supports adolescents' psychosocial development and functioning (Barber, Stolz, Olsen, Collins, & Burchinal, 2005). Parental support is defined by a variety of affective, nurturing, and loving parental behaviors (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006). Antonio and Moleiro (2015) define parental support as parental behavior that allows adolescents to feel comfortable, recognized, and accepted. Parental support is characterized by involvement, emotional willingness, warmth, acceptance, and responsiveness (Cummings, Davies, & Campbell, 2000). In addition, comforting behavior, kissing, praising, and hugging are also forms of expression of parental support for adolescents (Rohner R. P., 2004).

Parental support consists of four aspects. First aspect is emotional, involves the adolescent's affection, which can be given in the form of care and warmth. Secondly is instrumental, which is given in the form of direct assistance to adolescents. The third aspect is information, including advice, direction, and feedback on adolescents' attitudes and actions. Finally, the participation aspect is in the form of interaction and parental presence (Sarafino, 2014). Parental support aims to create a safe and comfortable environment for adolescents (Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Monsma, & Brilman, 1983). Consistent treatment of parental support enables healthy and close interactions between parents and adolescents. Furthermore, parental support

can result feelings of protection and support, emotion regulation, and better stress coping skills in adolescents. In fact, the process of internalizing social values and norms is also facilitated by parental support. As a result, adolescents' prosocial behavior and social competence increase (Zheng & McMahon, 2019). Study also found an association of parental support with avoidance of alcoholism, depression and juvenile delinquency (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Another study found that parents have not applied parental support effectively to adolescents. Kristiani and Lunanta's (2020) research in Jatinegara found that adolescents still have negative feelings towards their parents. Out of a total of 121 adolescents, 57% of adolescents hope that parents can communicate, understand and cooperate and 17% want their parents to provide support and good opinions. Meanwhile, in Makassar, 19.5% adolescent don't have close relationship and 12% feel neglected by their parents.

Parental support plays an important role in the formation of moral identity in adolescents. Gunarsa (2003) stated that morality is first taught by parents. Notably, parental support is the strongest predictor of moral identity compared to other parenting dimensions (Sengsavang & Krettenauer, 2015). Parental support will be the basis for contributing to the importance of morality in adolescents (Kochanska, 2002). Parents who are supportive and have open communication play a major role in adolescent moral development. Furthermore, it is mentioned that parents who are willing to engage in value-related conversations with adolescents will encourage the formation of moral identity (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; Santrock, 2011). In addition, compared to adolescents who have negative interactions with their parents, adolescents who perceive relationships with parents as supportive can internalize more moral values into their self-concept (Koc Arik, 2021).

Those parental behavior also allows adolescents to understand parenting messages accurately. When adolescents feel comfortable and loved by their parents, their tendency to listen, accept, and agree with what parents say and do will increase (Hardy, Bhattacharjee, Reed II, & Aquino, 2010). Furthermore, this acceptance contributes to adolescents' internalization of moral values and norms. Thus, adolescents will be able to develop morality, about right and wrong things and a sense of responsibility for their behavior (Hardy, Padilla-Walker, & Carlo, 2008).

Based on the theoretical explanation and the results of previous research, it can be concluded that parental support correlates with the moral identity built by in adolescent. Specifically, late adolescence. Research found that moral identity will develop optimally during late adolescence, namely at the age of 18-24 years (Kaur, 2020). At this age, late adolescents are increasingly focused on internalized standards, goals, values, and beliefs, so it is important to have a moral identity (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). Other studies have also found that parental support becomes more important in influencing morality in late adolescence than at any other age (Mills R., Mann, Smith, & Kristjansson, 2021). Similarly, surveys and statistical data also reveal the behavior of late adolescents today, in Indonesia and even Makassar City. Therefore, the researcher sees the urge to explore the relationship between the two variables. Especially, the influence of parental support to moral identity on late adolescents in Makassar. The following hypotheses are set out in this study;

 $H_0$  = There is no effect of parental support to moral identity on late adolescent in Makassar  $H_1$  = There is an effect of parental support to moral identity on late adolescent in Makassar

## Method

This research used quantitative research method with correlational design. This research was conducted on late adolescents at Makassar (18-21 years old). The sample included 304 late adolescents (33% male), 18 years old (n=65), 19 years old (n=70), 20 years old (n=71), 21 years old (n=98). The scale used in this study were Parental Support Scale and Moral Identity Questionnaire that have been adapted by the previous researchers.

Parental support were assessed using the 38-item of Parental Support Scale (Gunandar & Utami, 2017), consisting of four subscale: emotional (17-item), information (5-item), instrumental (9-item), participation (7-item). Participants responded to 38 statements on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

Moral identity was assessed using the self-report moral identity questionnaire adapted by Nauli (2016) inspired by Black and Reynolds (2016). The 20-item questionnaire which consists of two subscales: moral self (the degree to which adolescent identified themselves based on moral values) and moral integrity (the extent to which participants willingly to outwardly display a consistent behavior based on the moral traits). Participants responded to 20 statements on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (completely agree).

The survey was administered online using google form. Participants' responses were kept strictly confidential and only known to the researchers. The expectation of our hypothesis was that parental support contributed to moral identity on late adolescent in Makassar. The data collected was analyzed by using the simple linear regression analysis.

## **Results**

The collected data show different demographic variations, that can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.**Participant demographic data
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		Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	100	32.9%	
	Female	204	67.1%	
Age (years old)	18	65	21.4%	
	19	70	23%	
	20	71	23.4%	
	21	98	32.2%	

Table 1 shows that out of a total 300 participants involved in study, there was 100 male (32.9%) and 204 female (67.1%). Based on age, there was 21.4% (n=65) 18 years old, 23% (n=70) 19 years old, 23.4% (n=71) 20 years old, and 32.2% (n=98) 21 years old participants.

Researcher also conducted descriptive analysis from the collected data. The data were then categorized into five categories to see the level of parental support and moral identity of participants, that shown at Table 2 and 3.

**Table 2.** Descriptive analysis results

Variable	Minimal	Maximal	Mean (M)	Deviation Standard (SD)
Parental Support	94	184	141.92	19.284
Moral Identity	55	94	74.46	8.018

**Table 3.** Categorization of variables

Variable	Score	Categorization	Quantity	Percentage
Parental Support	170 < X	Very High	25	8.2%
	151 < X ≤ 170	High	73	24%
	132 < X ≤ 151	Moderate	113	37.2%
	111 < X ≤ 132	Low	78	25.7%
	X ≤ 111	Very Low	15	4.9%
Moral Identity	86 < X	Very High	17	5.6%
	78 < X ≤ 86	High	81	26.6%
	70 < X ≤ 78	Moderate	134	44.1%
	62 < X ≤ 70	Low	50	16.4%
	X ≤ 62	Very Low	22	7.2%

Table 3 shows the categorization of parental support and moral identity. For parental support, it is known that there was 8.2% (n=25) participant at very-high category, 24% (n=73) at high category, 37.2% (n=113) at moderate category, 25.7% (n=78) at low category, and 4.9% (n=15) at very low category. Meanwhile, for moral identity, there was 5.6% (n=17) participants belong to very-high category, 26.6% (n=81) belong to high category, 44.1% (n=134) belong to moderate category, 16.4% (n=50) belong to low category, and 7.2% (n=22) belong to very low category.

The data also been analyzed by grouped participant's data score based on demographics data. The results can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Categorization based on scale measurement results

Variable	Demographic	Categorization				
		Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Parental	Gender					
Support	Male	1.3%	6.9%	10.9%	11.5%	2.3%
	Female	6.9%	17.1%	26.3%	14.1%	2.6%
	Age (years old)					
	18	1%	3.9%	8.6%	6.6%	1.3%
	19	2.5%	5.3%	7.2%	6.6%	1.3%
	20	1.6%	6.3%	9.9%	4.6%	1%
	21	3%	8.6%	11.5%	7.9%	1.3%
Moral	Gender					
Identity	Male	1.3%	<b>7.</b> 6%	12.8%	7.2%	3.9%
	Female	4.3%	19.1%	31.3%	9.2%	3.3%
	Age (years old)					
	18	0.3%	4.6%	11.2%	4.3%	1%
	19	0.7%	5.9%	8.9%	5.3%	2.3%
	20	1.3%	5.6%	9.9%	5.3%	1.3%
	21	3.3%	10.5%	14.1%	1.6%	2.6%

First analysis step conducted was assumptions test, which is normality and linearity test. The results of these tests can be seen in Table 5.

	Table 5.		
	Assumption test		
Test	Variable	Sig.	
Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Parental Support	.031	
	Moral Identity	.021	
Linearity	Moral Identity * Parental	022	
(Deviation from Linearity)	Support	.923	

The test results showed a significance value (p>0.05). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the research data distributed normally. Furthermore, research variables are linear. The fulfillment of two assumptions above makes it possible to test hypothesis.

**Table 6.**Hypothesis test

D D <sup>2</sup> Cia		Sig.	Unstandardized Coefficient Constant	Unstandardized Coefficient POS	
	n	Sig.	(a)	(b)	
.254	.064	.000	59.500	.105	

The 304 data were analyzed with simple linear regression. We found a significant positive effect of parental support to moral identity ( $R^2$ =.064, p<.05). It shows that the hypothesis was accepted. Higher level of parental support will increase the level of moral identity on late adolescence in Makassar. However, the effect was only found 6.4%, which is subjectively low. That is, 93.6% of moral identity was affected by other variables.

Overall, late adolescent' parental support was fairly high (M=141.92, SD=19.29), so did the moral identity level (M=74.46, SD=8.02). Furthermore, there were enhancement of parental support level followed by age. Participants 18-19 years old particularly accepted lower parental support level compared to 20-21 years old. Similar conditions to moral identity level. Participants at 18-19 years old reported lower moral identity level compared to older participants.

## **Discussion**

Our finding suggest that parental support contributes to late adolescent's moral identity level. These finding are in line with several previous studies. Immaculata, Wibawa, and Suleeman (2017) found that parental support is positively related to moral identity on late adolescents in Jabodetabek (Indonesia). Van Petergem, Vansteenkiste, Soenens, Zimmermann, and Antonietti (2016) also found that adolescents with supportive parents internalize moral values more than adolescents who do not receive parental support. This is because parents play an important role in adolescent development, especially in the moral domain. Furthermore, it was explained that adolescents are more likely to accept prohibitions and orders from parents regarding moral issues, such as related to lying or stealing behavior. Adolescents are also reported to have low disagreement scores against parents when it comes to the moral issues. Thus, parental behavior significantly influences adolescent moral development (Hoffman, 2000). Similar findings were also reported by Putra and Widyana (2020) that adolescents' moral identity can be formed effectively in the presence of parental support.

Lickona (1994) explains that moral identity requires effective parenting methods from parents, in order to develop optimally. This emphasizes the importance role of parents, parental support, in the development of moral identity. A loving and affectionate parenting environment can be the basis for the establishment of positive relationships and secure attachment between

parents and adolescents. This environmental atmosphere will encourage the process of internalizing moral values in adolescents (Sengsavang & Krettenauer, 2015). High parental support conveys the message that parents believe adolescents can display better behavior or higher moral standards (Patrick & Gibbs, 2012).

When adolescents accepted warmth from their parents, they will internalize the values of kindness and compassion into their moral concepts. A close relationship with parents can also be a motivation for adolescents to obey and internalize parenting messages, including the desire to look good to parents (Thompson, 2006). In addition, parental support also shows parents' respect for adolescents' perspectives and encourages adolescents to consider other people's points of view. Thus, adolescents do not just follow the rules from parents but have full awareness of their decisions before taking an action (Hutchinson, 2007). In fact, Sengsavang and Krettenauer (2015) mentioned that parental support can be described through adolescents' moral behavior preferences.

Furthermore, ethical and normative behaviors performed by parents also enhance adolescents' moral identity. Late adolescents reported that warm and supportive parents tended to explain their motivation in performing moral actions (Schutz & Baker, 2023). Adolescents also reported more emotions of guilt and shame when breaking rules, compared to adolescents who did not receive parental support (Shadmanfaat, Choi, Kabiri, & Yun, 2020). It was found that adolescents with supportive parents were better able to resist engaging in rule-breaking behavior. Particularly in that study, adolescents were able to refuse an invitation to use illegal drugs (Sengsavang S., 2018).

Meanwhile, it is known that the R<sup>2</sup>=0.064, that is categorized low by Chin (1998). Thus, it can be said that the effect of parental support on the moral identity of late adolescents in Makassar City is relatively weak. Nevertheless, several studies emphasize the positive role of parental support in adolescent development. Ishoy (2017) study found a negative relationship between parental support and adolescent involvement in delinquent behavior. Parental support was instead associated with positive outcomes, specifically reducing delinquent behavior in adolescents. Chakroun-Baggioni, Izaute, and Fall (2021) also found a protective effect of parental support on adolescent alcohol consumption behavior. Adequate quality of parental support can reduce the risk of adolescent alcohol abuse. Another study also found the influence of parental support on the adjustment process of students in college. Parents are still seen as the main source of support, and enable adolescents to adapt to the world of college even to finding a job (Benito-Gomez, Lee, McCurdy, & Fletcher, 2022). Barber (2005) views parental support as one of the important things in the process of fostering relationships between parents and adolescents. Parental support can be perceived by adolescents with the aim of supporting adolescent development (Barber, Stolz, Olsen, Collins, & Burchinal, 2005). Supportive parenting describes the emotional support provided to adolescents, which are characterized by warmth, empathy, and acceptance. In addition, parents are also able to create an emotional atmosphere full of encouragement and positive appreciation, and will always be ready whenever needed by adolescents (Hakala, 2018).

However, the weak influence of parental support to moral identity found in this study can be caused by several factors. For example, parental characteristics, adolescent characteristics, or other factors that play a role during the developmental period of late adolescence. One of these factors is parental characteristics, that is the level of moral identity of parents. Grusec and Goodnow (1994) stated that parents with high moral identity tend to be more successful in transferring moral messages and values to adolescents. Parents who have high moral identity also tend to treat others with respect and compassion, and enjoy discussing humanitarian issues. These parents are more likely to have more open communication with adolescents, especially in conflict and dilemma situations of adolescent behavior in the social environment (Laible, et al., 2019).

Although adolescents come from parents who have an attached relationship, adaptive, full of warmth, and open communication, or in short, provide parental support. However, with parents who have low moral identity standards, adolescents tend to have lower moral standards as well. Therefore, the development of adolescent moral identity also depends on the concept of moral identity and the method of moral value socialization from parents (Zhu H., 2023).

In addition, the context of the community environment can also play a role for adolescents. Studies show that community approaches are also effective in developing adolescents' moral identity (Yu, Siegel, Clithero, & Crockett, 2021). Zhu (2023) also found the contribution of involvement in prosocial actions or community service to the moral identity of late adolescents. Therefore, it can be argued that other indicators of relationship quality also need to be considered during the adolescent developmental period. Nonetheless, parental support still plays an important role in late adolescents' moral identity development.

On the other side, this research has several limitations. First, research results only show the influence of parental support on moral identity in one group of age, namely late adolescence. This research can't provide a broad picture of identity and moral development. Then, the lack of supervision on the filling of research instrument causes it to occur an error data that isn't filled properly according to the instructions. At the end, a lot of data are not being available to be used in the statistical analysis.

### Conclussion

Parental support significantly contributed to the moral identity of late adolescents in Makassar, in positive direction. Thus, hypothesis proposed in this study was accepted. That is, the higher parental support is received, the higher moral identity of late adolescents, and vice versa. It is known that the effect of parental support on moral identity is 6.4%, which is classified as low. This shows that there are 93.6% other factors that influence moral identity. However, this study was conducted online, so participant's filling process was done without supervision of researcher. Other limitations is the finding of study only show effect of parental support in one age group, that is late adolescents. This study cannot provide a broad picture of identity and moral development during adolescence period. It would be beneficial for future researcher to include a broader type of sample (e.g., early to late adolescent), and it would be very interesting to differ various type of caregiver (e.g., fathers, mother, grandparents) and adolescents from a variety of background. Such future studies will shed further light on the contribution of parental support to moral development on adolescents.

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