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FROM HOME TO HEART: VALUES BEGIN WITH FAMILY

***Annotation.** The foundation of a child's character and moral compass is built within the family, making the role of parents and caregivers crucial in the early acquisition of values. This study explores how families serve as the primary source of value education during early childhood, examining the ways love, discipline, and role modeling shape a child's ethical and emotional development. It emphasizes the importance of nurturing environments that foster respect, empathy, honesty, and responsibility, highlighting the impact of parental behavior and communication on a child's social and emotional intelligence. By analyzing family dynamics and their influence on value formation, the research underscores the lifelong benefits of instilling positive values early in life. This work aims to inform parents, educators, and policymakers about the critical need to support families in creating nurturing spaces where values can flourish, ensuring a strong foundation for future generations.*

***Key words:** value, value education, early years, parenting styles, parenting.*

***Анотація.** Основа характеру та морального компасу дитини будується в сім'ї, що робить роль батьків та опікунів вирішальною для раннього набуття цінностей. У цьому дослідженні досліджується, як сім'я є основним джерелом виховання цінностей у ранньому дитинстві; досліджується, як любов, дисципліна та рольова модель формують етичний та емоційний розвиток дитини. Наголошується на важливості сприятливого середовища, яке сприяє*

розвитку поваги, емпатії, чесності та відповідальності, підкреслюючи вплив батьківської поведінки та спілкування на соціальний та емоційний інтелект дитини. Аналізуючи сімейну динаміку та її вплив на формування цінностей, дослідження підкреслює переваги прищеплення позитивних цінностей на ранньому етапі життя протягом усього життя. Ця робота має на меті проінформувати батьків, педагогів і політиків про критичну потребу підтримувати сім'ї у створенні місць для виховання, де цінності можуть процвітати, забезпечуючи міцну основу для майбутніх поколінь.

Ключові слова: *цінність, ціннісне виховання, ранній вік, стилі батьківства, батьківство.*

Introduction. In this study, where the family environment and parenting issues are examined in the acquisition of values at an early age, the importance of values education at an early age will be discussed first. The family is the first and most influential environment in which a child learns fundamental values that shape their character and worldview. From the earliest moments of life, children absorb moral principles, cultural traditions, and social behaviors through daily interactions with parents and caregivers. These early experiences lay the foundation for ethical decision-making, empathy, responsibility, and respect—qualities that contribute to personal growth and societal well-being. Values education is not confined to formal schooling; rather, it begins at home, where children observe and imitate their parents' actions, attitudes, and beliefs. Parents serve as role models, guiding their children through verbal communication, emotional support, and shared experiences. Whether through storytelling, daily routines, or simple acts of kindness, the family instills essential virtues such as honesty, compassion, cooperation, and perseverance. These values become deeply rooted in a child's identity, influencing their relationships, academic success, and future contributions to society. In today's rapidly changing world, where external influences such as technology and peer interactions play an increasing role in shaping young minds, the importance of family in value transmission remains paramount. Strong family bonds and positive parenting

practices create a nurturing environment where children develop a sense of belonging, security, and moral integrity. Research suggests that children who grow up in value-centered households are more likely to demonstrate prosocial behaviors, emotional resilience, and ethical decision-making in adulthood. This paper explores the critical role of family in value formation, highlighting how early childhood experiences within the home environment contribute to lifelong character development. By understanding the profound impact of parental guidance, cultural traditions, and family interactions, we can reinforce the importance of nurturing core values that shape responsible and compassionate individuals.

The aim research. The study was conducted to reveal the role of the parents on value acquisition of the children. The topics on which studies investigating the family environment and parental influence on the acquisition of values are focused will be explained. In this section, parenting style, discipline techniques and the parent-child relationship will be emphasized. Then, the place and importance of the family in value education will be discussed. In the last section, the study will be concluded by explaining other factors affecting the acquisition of values in the family, except for parenting style, discipline techniques and the parent-child relationship.

Research Results.

Early age values education. Early childhood, which is defined by some as the period between the ages of 0-6 [26] and by others as the period until reaching compulsory school age, is a critical period in which the child's physical development is very rapid, cognitive, emotional and social development varies from day to day, and is known to significantly affect personality formation [1]. However, early childhood is an important developmental process that is also emphasized in terms of character and moral development and has a strong effect on the acquisition of values that the individual will carry throughout his/her life [17]. The fact that most of the time is spent in the family environment and under the influence of parents during this process necessitates the investigation of the effect of the family and parents on the acquisition of values.

Family environment and parental impact on the acquisition of values

The effect that the family has on the child at an early age emerges years later when children gain abstract thinking skills and begin to form their own moral and value world (during adolescence). Therefore, studies investigating the effects of family and parents on moral development and the acquisition of values are mostly conducted on adolescent samples and have mostly been conducted on perceived parenting style [28], parental responsibilities [7], parental socialization [3; 9; 19] parenting styles [4; 10; 13; 22] and parent-child relationship [6; 21 - 22]. As can be seen, although the topics researched show slight differences, in general, research on family environment and parental influence in the acquisition of values focuses on parenting styles, child rearing and discipline techniques, and parent-child relationships in values education in the family [27].

Parenting styles. Baumrind claims that parents should neither be punitive nor distant. Instead, she suggests that they should develop rules for children and be compassionate towards them [24]. Baumrind has defined four types of parenting styles (attitudes). These are: authoritarian parent, democratic parent, neglectful parent and permissive parent [13]. It is defined [24] these parenting styles in his book «Lifespan Development» as follows:

1. *Authoritarian parenting:* A restrictive and punitive attitude that forces children to obey his orders. They control their children, set strict rules. They allow very little verbal communication. It is associated with children's social inadequacy.

2. *Democratic parenting:* An attitude that encourages children to be independent but still imposes limits and controls on their actions. They usually allow verbal exchange. They are warm towards the child and make them feel their love.

3. *Neglectful parenting:* An attitude in which the child is extremely uninterested in his/her life.

4. *Permissive parenting:* An attitude of parents who are closely interested in their children but do not demand anything from them and do not set rules. It is particularly associated with a lack of self-control.

Many researchers argue that a democratic parenting attitude that includes compassion, along with its boundaries and rules, is more effective in children's moral development and value acquisition [22]. It is widely believed that children of parents with a democratic attitude can internalize and adopt values, and that the life practices of neglectful and authoritarian parents and the value education they will provide will not have a serious meaning in the child's life [1]. In addition, in a study examining the effect of parenting style on the development of moral values in children in Indonesia [10], it was concluded that the most effective parenting style in the development of moral values at an early age is authoritarian parenting. According to this study, when a child makes a mistake, hits a friend, takes someone else's property, or is rude to someone more mature, parents are authoritarian. Thanks to this strict parenting that parents apply to their children, children will develop good moral values and obey their parents as authorities. This research supports the view that the effectiveness of parental attitudes cannot be considered independent of context and can vary from culture to culture and socioeconomic level [23]. Similarly, other studies that reveal that parenting styles common in individualistic and collectivist societies can have different effects on the transfer of values also support this view [22]. In conclusion, although it is an obvious fact that parenting styles have an important role in the transfer of values, it should not be expected that any parenting style that can vary from culture to culture and from family to family will have an absolute truth in children's acquisition of values. It is insufficient to make explanations according to certain parenting styles in children's acquisition of values and determination of moral standards. Instead of adopting and implementing certain parenting styles, parents should know their children and develop appropriate styles that will best respond to them.

Discipline techniques. A developmental theorist who studies child rearing techniques and moral development [23] has revealed that parents use three types of discipline techniques: withdrawal of love, use of force, and explanation.

1. *Withdrawal of love:* It comes from the psychoanalytic approach, which emphasizes punishment and loss of parental love. Withdrawal of love is a discipline

technique that involves withdrawing love or attention from the child, such as the parent refusing to talk to the child or telling the child that they do not like him/her. Such as, «If you do this, I will live in another house»; «I will not love you from now on»; «I will leave»; «If you are left without a mother, you will understand me»...

2. *Use of force*: It is a discipline technique in which the parent tries to gain control over the child or his/her resources. Examples include beating, threatening, or restricting toys. Some parents who use this discipline technique may give their children physical punishments. However, these physical punishments cause many behavioral problems in children, such as behavioral disorders, thumb sucking, nail biting, toilet problems, sleep problems, tics, and fears. The negative effects of the use of force technique on children are not limited to behavioral problems; children can imitate the inadequate self-control model they see in their parents who use force when they encounter anxiety [23].

3. *Explanation*: It is a discipline technique based on the parent explaining to the child how their behavior will result in others and the reasons for their own behavior. When factors such as knowledge and etiquette are taken into account, explanations about values, moral rules and the reasons for their behavior should begin at the age of 3-4 [25]. In the explanation process, attention should be paid to the time and environment, and the advice should be short, clear and understandable by children, as well as being suitable for the developmental characteristics of children [25].

Parent-child relationship. Parent-child relationships introduce children to the mutual obligations of close relationships. In this relationship, the parent's obligation is to provide positive care for the child and to guide them to become competent individuals. The child's obligation is to maintain a positive relationship with the parent [8]. A positive parent-child relationship with mutual obligations, a communication style that supports parents' asking questions and interaction, and the moral development of children and adolescents are related. In a study conducted with infants, it was found that the orientation of parents and infants to respond to each other was associated with an increase in internalization and self-regulation in children [24]. In the study conducted by [18] with adolescents, it was determined that as

positive relationships with their parents increased, the moral maturity level of adolescents increased, and as negative relationships increased, the moral maturity level decreased. As a result, a positive parent-child relationship positively affects the child's moral development and value acquisition process in every period from infancy to adolescence.

Other factors affecting the acquisition of values in the family. In this section, in addition to parenting style, discipline techniques and parent-child communication, some other factors affecting the acquisition of values in the family will be listed as follows: the child's developmental status, the child's gender, the parent's gender, the child's attachment style, culture and socioeconomic status.

The child's developmental status. Parents should be informed about their child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and should closely follow the child's developmental stage [25]. For example, when teaching the child to be responsible, a child who does not yet have the ability to button his shirt should not be expected to button his shirt.

The child's gender. In studies conducted on children and adolescents, family environment and parental attitudes, there are significant relationships between the acquisition of values and moral development of especially boys and family factors and parental attitudes [4].

Parent's Gender. Another variable that has significant results in child and adolescent studies is parent's gender. In some studies, it has been concluded that especially the mother's communication with the child and her conversations with the child about moral values affect the child's acquisition of values and are more effective than fathers in moral development [11]. There are also studies showing that the Mother Values Education Program applied to mothers of children attending kindergarten causes significant differences in children's acquisition of values and social skill levels [15,16]. The fact that the mother is highly effective on the child's acquisition of values can be explained simply by cultural differences, but can also be associated with the mother's acceptance and control behaviors on the child [6]. Aside from the view that the mother is effective in transferring values to the child, some

researchers put forward the view that children and adolescents are influenced by the exemplary behaviors of family members who they think are similar to themselves in terms of physical and psychological aspects. According to this view, children and adolescents are more affected by the religious and moral values of their parents, whom they want to be like [12].

Children's attachment style. Children and adolescents who have a positive relationship with their parents or who are securely attached to them are more in line with their parents' values and religious commitments. However, children in child-parent relationships with conflict or insecure attachment characteristics may tend to seek different values when they reach adolescence [24].

Culture and socioeconomic status. The culture in which families live affects the values they accept and try to teach their children. While altruism is tried to be taught as an important value in some cultures, individualism comes to the fore in others [22].

In families with different socioeconomic levels, the parent's transfer of values to the child varies. According to the World Values Survey analysis, individuals in underdeveloped countries are more committed to their religious values than their counterparts in developed countries.

Conclusion and recommendations. Based on the idea that children spend a significant portion of their time in the family environment and that education begins in the family, the family is the primary educational environment in the acquisition of values at an early age. Studies on the family environment in the acquisition of values at an early age mostly focus on the family's parenting styles, discipline techniques for the child, and the relationship between the parent and the child. Many theories examine the place of the family in values education from different perspectives, and each emphasizes the importance of the family environment and parenting in the acquisition of values, completing them like pieces of a puzzle. The child's developmental status, the gender of the child and the parent, whether their genders are the same or different, the child's attachment style, and the culture and socioeconomic status of the family affect the acquisition of values in the family

environment. Due to the importance of the family in acquiring values at an early age, children should not be expected to acquire values by leaving it solely to the initiative of their families; the level of consciousness and awareness of families on this issue should be increased and educational programs for families should be increased.

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