

# Analysis the Role of Mother-Child Interaction in Developing Children's Positive Character and Mother's Happiness

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## ABSTRACT

Interactions between mothers and children have an important role in developing children's positive character and maternal happiness. This study aims to analyze the characteristics of mothers and children, the role of mother-child interactions in shaping children's positive character, and maternal happiness. This research use a qualitative method describe the reality of the events under study so that it is easier to get objective data. The sample was selected through a convenience sampling technique. Three mothers with children aged 2-6 years and are daily involved in parenting. The data collection techniques used in this study used method triangulation using (semi-structured interview, observation, and Focus Group Discussion). Three themes emerged elaborating parents' understanding of mother-child interactions: forms of interaction, ways of interaction, and the role of mother-child interactions. Three themes emerged from the research objectives further describing the involvement of the role of mother-child interactions in shaping children's positive character, namely: positive parenting, parental example and synergy, and parental strategies. From the last research objective, describing the involvement of the role of mother-child interaction in maternal happiness, three themes were obtained, namely: emotional bonding and support, religiosity, and children's achievement. Specifically, the results proved that all mothers viewed mother-child interactions as playing a significant role in shaping children's positive character and increasing maternal happiness.

**Keywords:** Mother-Child Interaction, Mother's Happiness, Positive Character

## Abstract

Interaksi antara ibu dan anak memiliki peran penting dalam pembentukan karakter positif anak serta kebahagiaan ibu. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis karakteristik ibu dan anak, peran interaksi ibu-anak terhadap pembentukan karakter positif anak, dan kebahagiaan ibu. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif yang digunakan untuk mengetahui atau menggambarkan kenyataan dari kejadian yang diteliti sehingga memudahkan mendapatkan data yang objektif. Contoh dipilih melalui teknik convenience sampling. Tiga ibu yang memiliki anak usia 2-6 tahun dan sehari-hari terlibat dalam pengasuhan. Jumlah contoh yang bersedia menjadi partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah 3

ibu. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan triangulasi metode (wawancara semi terstruktur, observasi, dan *Focus Group Discussion*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tiga tema muncul dari analisis tujuan mengelaborasi pemahaman orang tua mengenai interaksi ibu-anak: bentuk interaksi, cara interaksi, dan peran interaksi ibu-anak. Tiga tema muncul dari tujuan penelitian selanjutnya mendeskripsikan keterlibatan peran interaksi ibu dan anak dalam pembentukan karakter positif anak, yaitu: pengasuhan positif, teladan dan sinergi orang tua, dan strategi orang tua. Sementara dari tujuan terakhir penelitian, mendeskripsikan keterlibatan peran interaksi ibu dan anak dalam kebahagiaan ibu, didapatkan tiga tema, yaitu: ikatan dan dukungan emosional, religiusitas, dan pencapaian anak. Secara khusus hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa seluruh ibu berpandangan interaksi ibu-anak sangat berperan dalam pembentukan karakter positif anak dan meningkatkan kebahagiaan ibu.

**Keywords :** Interaksi ibu-anak, kebahagiaan ibu, karakter positif

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Family is the first and main place where a child receives education and care. Parents have the obligation to provide assistance to children in every phase of their growth and development. One of the things that parents can do is provide education to children related to the cultivation of good character. This is because the personality, behavior, and attitudes of children in the future are determined by character building carried out at the age of 0 to 6 years (Wulandari *et al.* in Maulida *et al.*, 2020). At an early age, including pre-school age, parents can provide a lot of stimulation, habituation, and examples of both positive words and actions so that children can have a positive character as well. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Permenkes RI) Number 25 of 2014 article 1, pre-school children are children aged 60 months to 72 months.

In the era of globalization, parents must be increasingly strict in supervising and assisting children's growth and development because there are still many cases of deviant child behavior including aggressiveness and bullying in children. Based on data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) in Databox 2023, the most common cases of bullying are at the elementary and junior high school levels, each with 25 percent of the total cases. This shows that the cultivation of positive character children is very important in pre-school age children in order to minimize and prevent children from deviant behavior. The role of parents, especially mother is very important in determining children's behavior, both inside and outside the home. The interaction between mother and child is one of the keys to successful child development. Good interactions between mother and children in everyday life will make it easier for children to get optimal development. According to Bowlby (1982), children's attachment to their mother greatly influences children's development and good communication between mother and children will help children grow and develop well. Mother-child interaction is also ideally more frequent, especially in pre-school children with non-working mothers, because mothers have more time with their children at home than working mother.

There are many activities that can be done to build mother-child interaction, starting from activities in the house, as well as activities in the house. Starting from activities when waking up to going to bed. One of the activities that can be done in mother and child interaction is storytelling. According to Salsabila *et al* (2021) storytelling can increase closeness and also introduce the character of the character in the story so that the implied moral message can have a positive effect on children and can be applied in their daily lives. Storytelling is also an activity that can also improve children's emotional intelligence. At the age of

4 to 6 years, there are several methods that can be done to children to improve their emotional intelligence, namely by stimulation methods, role playing, cooperative learning methods, discussion methods, and also storytelling methods (Rosidatun, 2018).

Mother-child interactions can not only influence the formation of children's character, but are also related to maternal happiness. This is because parent-child relationships significantly mediate the relationship between parenting stress and child quality (Dennis, Neece, and Fenning, 2018). Maternal moods and feelings are often overlooked in parenting, even though maternal happiness is very important. Happy mothers will find it easier to provide good parenting to their children. Maternal unhappiness has a negative impact on her life in carrying out her role as a mother. Cases of mothers killing their children are increasingly being found. Some examples are a case published by Kompas.com about a mother who killed a child in Brebes due to depression (Azanella and Kurniawan, 2022) and a case published on the Kompas Metropolitan page where a mother threw her baby in South Jakarta (Al Hamasy and Adri, 2023). Maternal unhappiness can be caused by parenting stress. According to Deater-Deckard, parenting stress is a negative condition experienced by someone due to the demands of parenthood (Andriani *et al.*, 2019). Parenting stress is also, according to Abidin, a state of parents with excessive feelings of tension and anxiety and is related to parenting, parental war, and when interacting with children (Alisma and Adri, 2021).

Interaction is the main key in human relationships, including mother-child interactions. Dixson, Bermes and Fair (2014) mentioned that interactions between mother and children refer to behaviors and feelings (understanding, loving, respecting, helping), including conflicts that arise. Mother-child interactions have many impacts on both the child and the mother. Mother-child interactions and relationships consisting of mother-child emotional attachment and quality of care/stimulus directly affect the quality of the child (Hastuti *et al.*, 2008). In reality, mother-child interactions are not optimized in parenting. Mother is vulnerable to stress and depression. This can happen because mother take care and do domestic work alone without the help of their husbands or household assistants (ART). According to the results of research by Putri and Sudhana (2013), housewives who use maids have lower stress than housewives who do not use maids. In some cases, mother feel stressed by the presence of children and also feel depressed when they have to continue interacting with children. This occurs because of the mother's own perception of her inability to carry out her roles and functions properly. Ultimately, this affects the mother's happiness in her daily life, especially in carrying out her role as a mother.

Mother-child interactions can also affect child development. Bocknek, Brophy-Herb, Fitzgerald & BurnsJager (2012); Sirois, Bernier & Lemelin (2019) mention that good interactions between mothers and children are very important because mother-child interactions provide experience, social and emotional learning, and provide a lot of feelings, so that children have high social-emotional development. This is in line with Lee (2022) who states that mother-child interaction has a positive relationship with emotional intelligence in early childhood.

Another impact of mother-child interaction is on the formation of positive character and good behaviour. Closeness between mother and child can reduce the risk of children having antisocial behavior and aggression (Zhang, Chen, Zhang, Zhou, and Wu, 2008). Santrock (2007) mentioned that at a more specific level, the response given by parents, especially mothers, to children's behavior in daily activities has significant implications for the formation of children's character. In addition, research by Chakranon et al (2024) shows that maternal happiness and well-being are the basis for positive parenting practices and child well-being. This research is expected to answer the following problems 1) what are the characteristics

of mothers and children? 2) how is the role of mother-child interaction in shaping children's positive character? 3) what is the role of mother-child interaction in mother's happiness?

## 2. METHODS

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach which is used to find out or describe the reality of the events under study so that it is easier to get objective data (Sugiyono, 2015). The sample was selected through convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where members of the population who meet certain practical criteria, such as ease of accessibility, geographical proximity, time availability and willingness to participate are involved as research participants (Etikan et al., 2016). The sample in this study were mothers who have children aged 2-6 years and are involved in daily care. The number of samples who were willing to be participants in this study were 3 mothers.

The stages of qualitative research conducted refer to Cresswel (2008), namely: (1) identification of problems targeted in the research; (2) literature review; (3) determining research objectives; (4) data collection; (5) data transcription; (6) data reduction; (7) data analysis and interpretation; (6) data verification and reporting. The data collected is primary data, which is data taken directly during the research. The primary data included family characteristics, child characteristics, mother-child interactions in shaping children's positive character, and mother-child interactions in increasing maternal happiness.

The data collection techniques used in this study used method triangulation (semi-structured interview techniques, observation, and Focus Group Discussions). Efforts to check the accuracy and consistency of the research results were carried out through validity and reliability procedures that refer to Yuniarsih (2011). The validity procedures were carried out using: triangulating, applying member checking, clarifying bias, and debriefing or discussing with fellow researchers. Furthermore, the reliability procedures carried out by researchers are checking the transcription results to ensure that there are no errors; coding carefully, comparing data with codes, discussing codes with the research team when sharing analysis, and cross-checking and comparing codes made by other researchers with codes that have been made by researchers. In the interview section, the data analysis techniques carried out are transcribing (verbatim), editing data to ensure that the data that has been taken is accurate data, coding data to provide codes for transcripts of interview results, classifying data based on similarities in the characteristics of sub-themes and themes, and tabulating data to display in the form of column and row/table/quote arrangements. Meanwhile, in the observation section, data analysis was carried out according to Myers' (2019) observation items, namely place, actor, activity, object, action, event, time, purpose, and feeling. Furthermore, the technical stages of data analysis in observations and FGDs are carried out with the same stages, namely: open coding, making codes freely from sentences/statements; axial coding, creating new categories based on the codes created in open coding; and selective coding, compiling existing categories into one theoretical explanation.

Procedures and recruitment of informants were carried out through searches of the three authors. The three informants were asked first about their willingness to be involved in this research. Previously, the researcher explained the three stages that informants would carry out: interviews, observations, and FGD. After the informants agreed to be involved in the research, the researcher agreed on a time to conduct interviews, observations and FGDs. The interviews conducted ranged from 90-120 minutes/person with 15 questions. Two weeks later the researchers conducted observations to directly observe the activities of the informants, while the FGD was conducted 10 days later with a duration of 90 minutes.

### 3. RESULT

The results of the analysis of informant characteristics (Table 1) show that all informants and husbands (100%) are categorized as young adults, with the lowest age being 25 years old and the highest age being 31 years old. All informants (100%) worked as housewives. The three informants were of diverse ethnicities, namely Sundanese, Madurese and Javanese. Only one informant has activities outside the home, namely being a reading park administrator. In addition, there is one informant with a senior high school education, while the other two informants have a bachelor's degree. The occupations of the informants' husbands varied from laborer, contractor, to private sector. The amount of income of the informants' husbands also varied, ranging from 5-20 million. Most informants (66.7%) had one child, with only one informant having two children. The gender of the informants' children is predominantly male (66.7%), while one informant's child is female. The informants' length of marriage ranged from 5-10 years with the smallest number of family members consisting of three people, and the largest number of four people. Regarding the use of household assistants (ART), most informants (66.7%) do not use ART services. Only one informant used ART. This difference reflects variations in family income and each family's needs and preferences in managing domestic tasks.

**Tabel 1. Characteristics of informants**

Characteristics	I1	I2	I3
Age	31	25	30
Last education	S1	SMA	S1
Occupation	IRT	IRT	IRT
Activity	-	-	Social activism
Tribe	Madura	Sunda	Jawa
Domicile	Serang	Sukabumi	Bogor
Total Income	0	0	0

Several different themes emerged consistently across the three data collection methods (interviews, observations and FGDs), indicating similarities in informants' responses to the aspects under study. A summary of the themes is presented in Table 1. Three themes emerged from the analysis of the second objective of the study, elaborating on parents' understanding of mother-child interaction: forms of interaction, ways of interaction, and the role of mother-child interaction: positive parenting, parental example and synergy, and parental strategies. While from the analysis of the fourth research objective, describing the involvement of mother-child interaction roles in maternal happiness, three themes emerged, namely: emotional bonding and support, religiosity, and children's achievement.

#### 1. Mothers' understanding of mother-child interaction

##### 1.1 Forms of interaction

The results of the research in the form of interaction there are three sub-themes, namely physical touch, verbal communication, and emotional support.

##### Physical touch

The results showed that informants agreed that interactions carried out by parents can be in the form of physical touch such as hugs, touches, and kisses.

"Hugs are very important for children so that they feel loved, cared for, and have a safe figure to share with." (I1, 30, W). "Hugs are very important in our opinion, because hugs increase bonding with children, can also transfer positive energy to children. Providing calmness for children, can also make children calm their emotions." (I3, 30, W) The observation shows that the informant (mother) likes to be close to the child and the child also likes to be close to the mother. The child occasionally hugs the mother and the mother gives a touch as a sign of affection. (I2, 25, O)

### **Verbal communication**

Not only through physical touch, the interaction between informants (mothers) and children can be in the form of verbal communication such as chatting, deep talk, and daily activities.

"Chatting with children is very important. I always invite my child to talk/chat since I was in the womb. Even though my child does not understand and cannot respond to what my baby is saying, at least I always believe my child will listen to what his mother says." (I1, 30, W)

"Oh, chatting is important for child development from an early age. You have to talk to them if you don't talk to them, how will their development be if they can't talk, it's a pity." (I2, 25, W)

"Very important, if I chat with the child it is more about daily activities. For example, how they feel today, who they play with, what they play, what makes them happy or sad." (I3, 30, W)

### **Emotional support**

Informants (mothers) mentioned that interactions between mothers and children can be in the form of comforting children when they are sad, giving praise and motivation.

"Very important, if I chat with my child, it is more about daily activities. For example, how they feel today, who they play with, what they play, what makes them happy or sad." (I3, 30, W)

"I really like to talk about anything with him. For example, when I wake up I always ask my child "how did you sleep last night? Was it good?" And my child will respond by answering what I ask.

That goes on every day. I ask again "what do you want to eat today? Mommy will make it if the ingredients are available." (I1, 30, W).

### **Education**

This study reveals various forms of mother-child interaction involving storytelling and book reading as educational media. It was found that these activities not only foster children's interest in reading, but also serve as a means to convey moral values and knowledge.

"Since infancy, it is gradual, from soft books and then gradually according to their age level until later they are older, more texts are read every day at a certain time, for example going to bed or when they want to." (I3, 30, F)

"I also like storytelling and reading fairy tale storybooks to my child, until my child also memorizes the story. I read many stories such as stories of prophets, about religious lessons, science, and about daily activities." (I1, 30, W)

"Stories like animals, or dinos, he likes dinos. Later he'll say something funny, teaching from the story, you can't lie, you have to study hard while chatting." (I2, 25, W)

Mother-child interactions are also carried out to apply discipline and guide children to be consistent with the rules that apply both in the family and society.

"For positive sentences, it is most often from the call "sholih child", so... "Let's keep our promises..." More to the characters that we want to aim for at that time. For example, "Let's keep our promises, let's be disciplined, let's be pious children", something like that. Motivating sentences so that children also never give up on completing activities." (I3, 30, W)

"I always say "can you please get that item for mom?" or "can mom ask for help? When talking to grandfather, we must be polite and not shout because grandfather is an old man and we must respect our parents." (I1, 30, W)

"I also talk to him, to be a good tea boy, a soleh, talk well, don't like jail, don't like to hit." (I2, 25, W)

### **Socialization**

Interaction between mother and child can also be done while taking the child to public places. In addition to increasing attachment between mother and child, this can also teach children to understand the meaning of socialization in life.

"I often take them on the motorcycle, around the neighborhood, and then have snacks. Ice cream, whatever snacks he wants while chatting with the child." (I2, 25, F)

"I usually participate in my activities. For example, I have a weekly recitation, and tahsin, so I also participate. So I also try to interact with the surrounding environment too. For example, there are other mothers who are older, like ... learning manners, like that, socializing in the environment with friends is playing well, working together, sharing, resolving conflicts like that. More directed too." (I3, 30, F)

### **1.2. Mode of Interaction**

#### **Limitation in hugging only to the closest person**

One of the ways of interaction is hugging, but the research found that there are limitations in hugging. Children only hug close and familiar people such as parents, grandparents, uncles, or aunts.

"When meeting his grandmother and aunt, for example, he does not hesitate to hug his grandmother and aunt as a way of expressing his affection. I think this is a very positive thing because what I do becomes a habit for my child. But of course there are still limits in this hug. My son will not hug people he does not know intimately." (I1, 30, W) The observation results show that during the observation the child only hugged the mother and was happy to be near the mother. Although their neighbors and friends are outside the house, the child knows the limits of hugging (I2, 25, O).

#### **Cuddling can be done in a variety of situations and moods**

The study also examined the important role of hugging as a form of physical interaction between mother and child. Hugs, as an expression of affection and emotional support, occur in a variety of situations and moods, helping to create a sense of security and comfort for the child. Through interviews and observations, it was found that hugs are often used by mothers when the child feels scared, sad, or in need of comfort. Here are some quotes that illustrate mothers' experiences of the importance of hugs in building emotional closeness with children.

"I hug my child when they are going to sleep, when they are afraid of something, when they cry, when they are sad." (I1, 30, W)

"Hugging is very important. If for example he cries, he is hugged." (I2, 25, W) In the observation activity, the child was seen hugging the mother and the mother hugged the child tightly (I3, 30, O).

### Chatting in daily activities

Chatting with children can be done when eating, waking up, storytelling when going to bed, cooking, playing, traveling, snacks, deep talk, reading books.

"Anyway, I always start interacting with my child from the time he wakes up until he sleeps again. When I play with my children, when I eat, there must be a lot of conversations with my children. Even when I take the child to the market, coming back from the market, for example, there is a wind and I say "son, the wind is very big" and he responds so we have a lot of conversations along the way." (I1,30, W)

"Another way of interacting is by playing with the child. I don't think the child needs expensive and fancy toys. But the child needs a simple toy but the mother can be beside him and interact with him. Because I think interaction with children is easy." (I1, 30, W) "Mainly by chatting, chatting about daily activities, then through books. But if for example there are specific messages to be conveyed and for example by direct interaction there are difficulties, usually looking for intermediaries through books. Like with storytelling it really helps. Then deeptalk before going to bed, like a flashback of how the day went." (I3, 30, W) Child-mother interactions can reveal both the child's and the mother's desires, talking about what is seen, held, and felt. This can build attachment between mother and child.

"I interact with my child in a simple way. With something that is seen, held, and felt. For example, when I am cooking, my child comes to accompany me, then I talk to him, "What is this vegetable called?" From small things, it then develops into a long conversation." (I1, 30, W)

"With me (mother) often inviting my child to talk about anything, my child is not afraid to tell me anything. For example, telling me that his friend cried while playing, telling me that he was loved by his grandmother, even telling me that his friend pinched him. So I know what the child feels and what the child thinks is dangerous for him." (I1, 30, W)

"If I chat with the child, it is more about daily activities. For example, how they feel today, who they play with, what they play, what makes them happy or sad. Like simple activities when I'm cooking, also sometimes, for example, when I'm involved. We chat about cooking, about family, whatever the theme is as much as possible as a topic of conversation." (I3, 30, W).

"When playing with dino toys or cars, he likes to say, show me the color, what shape this is, what kind of toy. Everything is shown to me. But it's good, so the child learns." (I2, 25, W)

### Quality and Quantity of Interactions

The results also highlighted the importance of the quality and quantity of interactions between mothers and children in building strong relationships and supporting child development. Both of these aspects are considered important by mothers, where quality interactions can have a deeper impact than just frequent interactions without emotional closeness.

"The quality and quantity of interactions with children are both important, because mothers must interact with children frequently so that children are comfortable. Especially when I'm not working, there should be a lot of interaction with the child. It seems like I am 24 hours interacting with my child." (I1, 30, W)

"Quality yes. If you are often with your child but alone, not familiar, like a lot of the time the mother is playing with her cellphone, the child is playing alone and then falls down, you don't know how it feels." (I2, 25, W)

"What is more important is actually quality. But yes, quantity is also necessary. But quality is more important. Because quality is more influential. If the quantity is frequent, but if there is no interaction, it



doesn't really matter." (I3, 30, W)

### **Reciprocity in Interactions**

The results showed the importance of reciprocity in the interaction between mother and child, where the quality of the interaction plays an important role. Quality interactions not only provide comfort and security for the child, but also create a sense of comfort for the mother, resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship. This is reflected in the experiences of mothers who state that good interactions provide more value, leave a deep impression on the child's heart, and strengthen the emotional bond between mother and child. Here are some quotes that illustrate the importance of reciprocity in mother-child interactions.

"In my opinion, quality mother-child interactions have interaction value. I mean there is good reciprocal interaction. Then there are things that make an impression on the child." (I3, 30, P)

"Mother-child interaction not only makes the child comfortable with the mother, but the mother is also comfortable with the child." (I2, 30, P)

### **Adjusting Children's Love Language**

Identified from two mothers, that the interaction between mother and child is carried out adjusting the child's love language (love language) so that the intent and purpose to be conveyed by the mother can be well received by the child. So that the interaction can have an impact on the child.

"Technically, you can follow the child's love language. Because maybe there are those who have to be talked to while doing something, playing something. That's like in the moment to talk about advice." (I3, 30, F)

"My child often asks to hug me as his mother suddenly. I think it is a form of comfort for my child to be close to his mother." (I1, 30, W)

### **1.3. Role of Interaction**

#### **Hugs create an emotional bond between mother-child**

Research results reveal how important hugs are in building emotional bonds between mothers and children. Hugs not only increase bonding and transfer positive energy, but also provide calmness and help soothe children's emotions.

"Hugs increase bonding with children, can also transfer positive energy to children. Providing calmness for the child, it can also make the child's emotions subside." (I3, 30, W)

"The impact of me familiarizing hugs with my child, my child has become a loving person to others (closest people such as his father, grandmother, and aunt)" (I1, 30, W)

"Anyway, whether he is crying, happy, going to sleep, sometimes there is nothing I want to hug him (the child), he also wants to be hugged. I can't count how many times. Anyway, often." (I2, 25, W)

### **Education**

One of the benefits of interaction between mothers and children is that it can be an educational medium, by teaching children about affection and empathy, encouraging children's development, fostering children's positive character, repeating (habituation) positive sentences, motivating children.

"The impact of other hugs when playing with peers, my child is kind to friends. For example, when his friend cries, he strokes his friend's head while saying don't cry, don't be sad. I am happy to see that my

child can be a loving figure and has a good character in his life both with his parents, closest family, and peers." (I1,30, W)

"The positive sentences delivered are very influential. Although sometimes we have to be patient, children don't immediately change, for example. But we keep on advising, and repeating what needs to be corrected, it really has an effect on the child." (I3, 30, W)

### **Improves Family Bonds**

Interactions that are established and familiarized between mothers and children can increase family bonds. Not only to parents (father and mother), but also to extended family such as grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, and others.

"Hugging increases bonding with children, it can also transfer positive energy to children" (I3, 30, W).

"There are many benefits of mother-child interaction, it can stimulate and train children's speech skills early on. It can foster a child's sense of empathy, compassion, and respect for others. It can make children open up to their mothers and be honest with their own feelings." (I1, 30,W) Observations show that the child is very close to the mother emotionally and physically, likes to be on the mother's lap, hugs the mother, and behaves well (I1, 30, O).

## **2. The Role of Mother-Child Interaction in Shaping Children's Positive Character**

### **2.1. Positive Parenting**

This research highlights the importance of positive parenting in mother-child interactions, one of which is characterized by the use of simple but meaningful words such as "sorry," "please," and "thank you." When the child makes a mistake, the mother re-examples it to reinforce the child's understanding. In everyday life, children are taught to say thank you after being helped, as well as understanding the importance of asking permission and speaking softly. Maternal happiness also plays a significant role, because when mothers are happy and present wholeheartedly, interactions with children become more positive and meaningful, creating good behavior in children. Observations showed that mothers consistently modeled these values, reinforcing positive behaviors in children.

"Simple positive words that are often said to children are sorry, please, and thank you." (I1, 31, W)

"When the child does something wrong, it is re-exemplified (given affirmation) to strengthen understanding" (I2, 25, W).

"Say thank you, sorry, ask for help, like that. Then, it is processed in daily life, he asks for help in opening what, please take what. Then if you have asked for help, you have taken it, you have opened it, what do you say? Thank you, like that." (I1, 31, F)

"Sometimes if we what... if we have... what creates children to behave well for example happy when interacting, it can create children to behave well." (I2, 25, F)

"When mothers are happy, God willing, they will be able to focus wholeheartedly on accompanying children to play, it will definitely have an effect. When we are 'present' and not, it affects their attitude. It must be felt by the child too if the mother is like floating" (I3, 30, F). Observations show that mothers model good values such as asking permission, thanking, and speaking softly (I3, 30, O).

The results also identified that one form of positive parenting is by setting parenting goals based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. One of the main goals is to instill religious and moral values through storytelling and reading storybooks, such as prophet stories and religious lessons. In addition, mothers try to have a clear parenting foundation based on religious teachings, so that each stage of child development can be directed

properly. Observations show that mothers are very aware of their role, see parenting as a mandate and a field of reward, and try to always be present in the child's growth and development with full awareness.

"I also like storytelling and reading fairy tale books to my child, until my child also memorizes the story. I read many stories such as stories of prophets, about religious lessons, ..." (I1,31,W)

"First determine the basis so that we have a direction to aim for, for example, if we want the basis to be based on the Qur'an and As Sunnah, of course, as a Muslim, then with age according to the development of the child's nature at each age stage." (I3, 30, W)

The results of observations show that informants want to continue to accompany the growth and development of their children with full awareness and realize it as a mandate and a field of reward. (I3, 30, O)

In addition, the research found other positive parenting through verbal and non-verbal interactions. Mothers use interaction to instill good values, talk about feelings, and tell stories, while physical touch such as hugs and kisses provide a sense of security and comfort. Observations also showed that mothers consistently engaged in physical interactions such as holding and hugging their children to strengthen emotional bonds.

"For me, it's more about communication and touch. Communication is like instilling good character, then ... telling stories, then asking how he is, asking how he feels, everything is asked if I am... As for touch, I happen to really like my son to hug and kiss his forehead and even though it's in a public place, he's not embarrassed and will continue to apply it until he grows up, don't hesitate even in public places. Because it makes him comfortable anyway." (I1, 31, F)

"If there is anything, hug him. Even if he's crying, or even if he's happy, he'll be hugged. So that he will be quiet" (I2, 25, W). Observations showed that mothers interacted with children in the form of holding and hugging. (I3, 30, O)

## 2.2. Parental Modeling and Synergy

The research also identified the importance of parental example and synergy in shaping children's character. Parents as the main figure serve as an example that children will follow. Children are not only taught through words but also with daily actions, such as speaking kindly and slowly, directing children to follow positive behavior patterns such as asking for permission and thanking. Observations show that these interactions not only cover social-emotional aspects but also support children's physical health by ensuring a balanced nutritional intake. Synergy between parents is also important in providing consistent support for optimal growth and development for children.

"Mothers are role models for their children. I am very sure that the child will see what his mother does. That's why, before I ask my children to do good, I definitely teach myself to do good too. So parents are also role models, and we also, while learning too, are also reminders for ourselves" (I1, 31, W).

"Oh, following from parents, it should be, especially yes. Dek, see mamah like this for example. He follows it, right? So we have to set a good example." .... But who else if it's the mother, right? So yes, we have to set an example, also tell her what is right, what is wrong." (I2, 25, W)

The observation shows that the mother speaks kindly and slowly and directs her child to follow her. In addition, the mother also modeled good things such as asking permission, thanking, giving appreciation to the child, hugging the child, and speaking slowly. (I3, 30, O)

"...so that it develops well, it provides the best support as well as from the food, good drinks, the point is. Not from drinks, right now there are many strange drinks. The point is to keep it under control. So give

like vitamins like that. Like fruit juice, nutritious food..." (I2, 25, F)

In addition to role modeling, the synergy between father and mother is important in shaping children's positive character. Solid support from the family, including harmonious interactions between parents, plays a major role in achieving the formation of children's positive character. Parents' active role in providing quality time with their children, such as playing, talking and sharing hugs without external distractions, has a significant impact on children's happiness and positive development. Observations also show that positive interactions between fathers, mothers and children can encourage good behavior and strong emotional bonds within the family.

"...according to the development of the child's nature at each stage of his age and to be ideal, of course, there must be a synergy between the mother and father.... Of course, there must be synergy between the mother and father, and the family that supports the child's environment. ...there is a foundation that the goals to be achieved then synergize between each family member. .... If you ask me, what makes me happy is when I have quality time with my children and husband and simple things are enough like playing together, chatting, hugging like just in bed gathering stories like that because I'm already very happy, without any distractions, like that, or walking around our house" (I3, 30, F)

"Sometimes if we what... if we have... what creates a well-behaved child it can create a well-behaved child, especially if the father and mother figure can be with each other, like that." (I2, 25, F) The observation showed that the mother persuaded her child to play with his father and the child said yes happily. (I3, 30, O)

### 2.3. Strategies and Approaches

The research also found strategies and approaches to mother-child interaction used by mothers in shaping children's positive character, particularly in terms of consistency and discipline. Mothers emphasized the importance of consistency in providing exposure to positive things to children, such as keeping promises, practicing discipline, and teaching values such as enthusiasm in worship. Observations also indicated that mothers actively implement positive habits and disciplinary values in their daily interactions with their children.

"The tips are consistent. Continuously, keep exposing good things.... Let's be precise, let's be disciplined, let's be pious children" (I3, 30, W).

"Honestly, the same as discipline...It should be like that. Discipline must also be for him later when he grows up." (I2, 25, W) Observation results show that informants apply positive habituation to their children, including discipline. (I3, 30, O)

Other strategies and approaches include giving praise and appreciation to the child. Mothers are also active in providing motivational sentences that encourage children to complete activities and face challenges, such as when playing in the playground. This approach not only demonstrates positive emotional support but also aims to foster perseverance and self-confidence in children. Observations confirmed that this interaction plays an important role in building children's internal motivation and strengthening the bond between mother and child in the learning process.

"Then sometimes without even being reminded, they clean up after themselves and then they say "Bun, I cleaned it up", "Oh yes, that's great". I also don't forget to give praise to him". (I1, 30, F)

"Like showing good behavior, giving praise to the child." (I2, 25, F)

"Motivating sentences so that children also never give up on completing activities, for example. Or motivate when there are challenging games on the playground." (I3, 30, W)

The observation showed that the informant gave appreciation "Wow, thank you sister, our drawing is good" to her child (I3, 30, O).

Other strategies and approaches include mothers caring and trying to meet their children's needs, understanding and responding to their children's physical, emotional and psychological needs, creating an environment that supports positive growth and development. Mothers try to make the child feel happy and valued by giving special attention, such as buying food or meeting the child's needs while playing or going for a walk. This approach not only strengthens the emotional bond between mother and child but also gives the child a sense of security and trust that their needs are being taken care of. Observations show that these interactions are an integral part of parenting that focuses on the happiness and needs of the children in the family.

"Mothers must be able to maintain their health because children always need mothers, children cannot be separated from mothers. With a healthy mother, the mother is also calm and happy to interact with the child." (I1, 31, W)

"When I'm traveling, playing, and if I can buy snacks for him, I'm very happy. If I can fulfill what he wants. If he is happy, it makes me even more happy." (I2, 25, W)

"So we have to remember that they need us to learn and whatever problems we face, don't let children who don't know anything." (I2, 25, W) Children really need me, I am their world" (I3, 30, W).

Observations show that mothers pay attention to fulfilling their children's needs and desires by making milk (I1, 31, O).

In addition, periodic evaluation of children's character and parenting methods are important aspects in the research results, part of the strategies and approaches in shaping children's positive character. The parenting methods applied by these mothers include direct supervision of children's interactions while playing with their friends, providing direction, and evaluating the progress and regression of a character. This strategy not only aims to monitor children's character development but also to ensure that the parenting methods applied are appropriate or not. Regular and reflective evaluation becomes an integral part of the parental approach to ensure that their children are getting the right support and direction in their character development.

"For me, the way I evaluate children's character building is by looking at their daily lives, for example when children play with their friends, mom monitors." (I1, 30, W)

"But at home I just look at them, like that. Then I direct them, if they are wrong I tell them, correct them." (I2, 25, W)

"If, for example, your brother has progress in being evaluated, for example about patience" (I3, 30, W)

### **3. The Role of Mother-Child Interaction in Maternal Happiness**

Mothers in this study consistently agreed across all three methods (interviews, observations, and FGDs) that mother-child interactions impact maternal happiness. Maternal involvement in children's lives through interaction contributes to maternal happiness through emotional bonding and support, religiosity, and achieving satisfactory child development.

#### **3.1. Emotional Bonding and Support**

Mothers described their children as a source of maternal happiness. One mother stated that the presence of children brings great joy, especially after waiting for them for several years. Mothers agreed that children are an encouragement and source of joy, as seeing children happy makes the mother feel happy

too. Mothers also emphasized that in order to give happiness to children, it is important for mothers to be happy first, so that positive interactions with children not only increase maternal happiness, but also increase family happiness.

"...I think children are a source of happiness for a mother. Especially since I waited for my child for several years, the name of my child itself means happiness." (I1, 31, W)

"...as naughty as he is, it's also a pity that we are tea ... But what about it ... anyway, it's like seeing him happy too. If I see him happy, I'm happy too." (I2, 25, W)

"...children are one of the sources of happiness. Although it is not the only and main source of happiness, mothers need to be happy first to be able to provide more happiness for children. Now the interaction with the child also increases our happiness, so we laugh, happy." (I3, 30, W)

Mothers described that when their children responded to their interactions with love and appreciation, they felt a sense of fulfillment and happiness. Appreciation from children reinforces a sense of being loved, valued and recognized, which is very meaningful for mothers in carrying out their roles.

"For me when my child is comfortable and chooses to be with me I will be happier ... mom is happier and mom also feels loved" (I1, 31, W).

"If I can fulfill what he wants, then tea. If he is happy, it makes me even more happy." (I2, 25, W)

"Suppose we are wrong with the child, apologize, then the child wholeheartedly forgives, doesn't feel that we are wrong, so it's like we as mothers really feel loved, making us feel happy, touched, touched. Oh my God, that means we have to be better as mothers." (I3, 30, W).

"For me, it's just like the same thing, like what ... it's still like a child if he gives something to his mother. It's... how... like happy to make me happy even though it's the smallest thing." (I2, 25, F)

This was also seen during observation, all mothers showed a responsive attitude when the child asked for help in bringing objects, food desires such as books, ice cream (I1, 31; I2, 25; I3, 30, O). Two mothers felt that their children's involvement and trust in their mother gave them a sense of meaning and increased their value as a mother. The value of motherhood was seen in the sense of pride and confidence that grew when children showed trust and appreciation. Mothers felt they had an important and meaningful role, providing deep emotional satisfaction. This suggests that emotional involvement and appreciation from children gives higher value to motherhood, strengthening motherhood identity and happiness.

"Oh like once when he was given money by his grandfather or from whoever, he liked to give it to me, to his mama. I'm happy, because "Oh, he understands, he trusts mom". There are many things." (I2, 25, W)

"In addition to what was mentioned earlier, so we feel more meaningful, oh I am needed, I have a role, children really need me, I am their world, sometimes I feel down, what am I, insecure, sometimes I don't have time for myself, but seeing them happy, they need us, they grow from them learning good things that we convey, I am meaningful, my life is meaningful, God gives the way. Increase my value as a mother." (I3, 30, W)

Mothers consider their children to be a meaningful source of emotional support for them when facing life challenges. Mothers feel calmer and happier when interacting with their children, which directly improves their mood and helps them cope with stress. Sharing stories, both sad and happy, with their children gives mothers the opportunity to pour out their affection and gain peace. The joy of interacting with children also helps mothers distract themselves from their problems, allowing them to think positively and regain their spirits. Children become solace, providing emotional support that makes mothers feel stronger, providing positive energy in living their daily lives.

"Mothers feel calmer. Happy interactions with the child put the mother in a good mood. Mom is also happy interacting with the surrounding environment and becomes more positive in living this life." (I1, 31, W)

"Of course, for me, it's to be a place to pour out affection. Like ... if there's anything to tell the child first, again sad, again happy, like telling deh. "Dek, today is like this, like this, like what ... And besides that, children are a source of family happiness." (I2, 25, F)

"So the happiness of interacting with children is also precisely when we have a problem that can divert, yes we think positively again enthusiasm for being with children, any problem can also be faced, so it gets distracted, forgets for a moment, because sometimes when you are alone sometimes you even think again. When I take care of the children, it becomes a solace." (I3, 30, W)

According to the informants (mothers), children are a source of high motivation for mothers to become better individuals as well as a learning tool. Interactions with children often require mothers to teach various values and skills, such as discipline and emotional control. This experience encourages mothers to get to know themselves better and to explore potential within themselves that may not have been realized before. Children trigger mothers to continue learning, developing, and controlling themselves, so that motherhood is not only a means to educate but also an avenue for personal growth. This creates a positive cycle where the mother becomes better, happier as an individual and as a parent, inspired by her children.

"...the most noticeable thing is that we also learn because of our children. So we learn a lot from the children actually, we learn through the children again." (I3, 30, W)

"So first I thought that I would be the one teaching and it turns out that with my children I actually learn a lot from them and recognize myself more. So when I want to teach something, for example teaching discipline, teaching emotional control, I actually feel that there is a lot that needs to be explored in myself. So I try to recognize myself more and more to control myself. So it's really like a trigger to learn really." (I3, 30, F)

The results showed that both mothers explained that the fulfillment of basic maternal needs is an important factor that makes mothers feel happy. When mothers take good care of their health, including eating regularly, having me time, getting enough rest, and maintaining personal hygiene, they have enough energy to interact with their children. Being healthy makes moms feel calm and able to fulfill their parenting role better. Having time for yourself and developing yourself through studying or pursuing hobbies is also important for mothers. With basic needs met, mothers can enjoy moments with their children more happily and energetically.

"... Usually, as a mom, I have to have me time even if there is no ART. We shouldn't really have no time for ourselves." (I1, 30, W)

"First, the mother's health. Mothers must be able to maintain their health because children always need mothers, children cannot be separated from mothers. With a healthy mother, the mother is also calm and happy to interact with the child." (I1, 30, W) First of all, we have to fulfill the basic needs of a mother first, eat, rest for enough energy. Inviting children to play also needs energy so mothers also have to be happy first, their rest time is fulfilled, their food, basic needs, bathing, this and that and there is also time for themselves, developing themselves, whether studying or any business hobbies." (I3, 30, F)

Mothers also recognized that support and synergy in parenting from family members, especially fathers, played an important role in their happiness. The presence of a husband who is willing to listen to and understand his wife's fatigue in caring for children and carrying out daily activities provides a sense of

being valued and supported. When husbands are actively involved in parenting and share responsibilities, mothers feel less alone in facing parenting challenges. In addition, support from the closest family, such as parents, also provides a sense of security and comfort.

"...I think the source of a mother's happiness is not only the child, but the presence of her husband and closest family (parents) is something that can make a mother happy. A husband who is willing to listen to his wife, tired of his wife taking care of the children and doing daily activities is very important for the mother's happiness." (I1, 31, W)

"Well, interaction with the child also increases our happiness, so we laugh, happy. Also, the family bond is closer, oh there is something that needs to be synchronized with the husband, up to date knowledge again, enthusiasm to learn again." (I3, 30, W)

Further research findings show that mothers' happiness also arises from simple activities that mothers consider as precious moments.

"Snacks... just going for a walk makes us happy. Just walking from here to the front. Very happy. It's rare. Sometimes it's really rare, especially if it's far away." (I2, 25, F)

"If you ask me, what makes me happy is when I have quality time with my children and husband and simple things are enough like playing together, chatting, hugging hugs like just in bed gathering stories like that because I'm already very happy, without any distractions, like that, or walking around our house. like that can make me very happy." (I3, 31, W)

### 3.2. Religiosity

Another finding in this study is that mothers consider religiosity as an important foundation to keep them positive in their outlook on life and happy in their role as mothers. Mothers perceived that aspects of religiosity strengthened their meaning of life and reminded them of their purpose in educating and interacting with their children, which ultimately impacted on their happiness. The realization that caring for children is an obligation and nature that has been determined, mothers feel they have a great responsibility before God. The belief that children are a source of sustenance and a field of reward adds to the mother's gratitude and happiness.

"Mothers must be able to realize that caring for children is a mother's obligation and nature." (I1, 30, W)

"He is like a source of sustenance too. It's strange for me too, if the child wants something, it just comes out of the blue." (I2, 25, W)

"Because earlier, children are up and down. Again like that, sometimes you have to be patient. So I remember what the purpose of educating children is for, yes, our efforts are also in front of our God, the accountability. It's like straightening our intentions again, educating children for the sake of Allah must be yes, like children are a source of reward too if we are patient so as a field of reward and then we learn a lot from children, like that." (I3, 31, W).

In addition, mothers believe that children are a trust, responsibility, and gift to be grateful for, taken care of, and educated properly. Children are seen as God's entrustment, which must be guarded with gratitude and care. Seeing children as the greatest trust makes mothers feel compelled to give their best, educate with love, patience, and sincerity. This not only strengthens the bond between mother and child but also increases maternal happiness, as mothers feel they are playing a very important and meaningful role in life.

"So for me it's really now. It used to be my desire but now it's not just a desire but also a responsibility so that they can grow up well, not limited to the family environment." (I1, 30, F)



"In my opinion, the presence of children is the first thing to make sure it is entrusted by God." (I2, 25, F)  
"So children are also a gift, a reminder, and a lesson... We can just be mistaken, let alone children who are still learning so lower expectations and continue to straighten out the divine intention to educate children as a responsibility, a mandate and God willing, it will be worth the reward of sincerity, the divine intention" (I3, 31, W).

"Children are the greatest trust and extraordinary gift. First, it was a one-year promil, so I was waiting for it later, then what students feel having children is like more enthusiasm for learning."  
(I3, 31, F)

Mothers perceive that children need a happy mother to create a positive and supportive environment for their growth and development. According to the mothers, maternal happiness greatly influences interactions with the child, as a happy mother can manage emotions well, providing the necessary attention, patience and love. When mothers feel calm and content, interactions with children become more pleasant and loving, which in turn makes children happier. This happiness is reciprocal, where a happy mother makes the child happy, and the child's happiness also adds to the mother's happiness. This is also believed by mothers to be a form of behavior taught by religion in order to get rewards.

"The strategy is that the mother must be happy first so that the interaction with the child becomes fun. Mothers must be able to manage their emotions and feelings well...Happy mom, happy child." (I1, 30, W)

"If the child is happy, the mother is also happy. But if the mother is happy too, the child will be happy."  
(I2, 25, W)

"...a source of reward too if we are patient so as a field of reward and we learn a lot from children, like that." (I3, 31, W)

In line with the results of observations, children show warm and happy behavior when the mother is in a happy condition (I3, 31, O).

### 3.3. Child Achievement

Mothers seeing their children grow well and exhibit positive behaviors gives them a sense of satisfaction and happiness. The child's achievements are a reflection of the mother's success in educating, which increases her sense of pride and happiness.

"The thing that makes me happy as a mother is when the child responds to mom, when the child eats well it also makes me happy. When children can behave well without being told by their mother. Mothers feel successful in educating their children, even though they have to sacrifice themselves not working in the public sector. This makes me very happy." (I1, 30, W)

"everything is memorable atuh yes. Asa... "Oh this is how it is to have children". Like that. Then what ... ah when the baby can first walk, can first understand, can open his own pants, this is that." (I2, 25, W)

"...for example, when there is a change with something that is expected from the child, of course, we are happy, thank God, it means that what we are trying to do has turned out oh yes, thank God, assessing the positive results, it means oh this has an impact, so that is also one of the happiness when interacting with the child, the child can see the changes in what we say." (I3, 31, W)

"...I was very happy, very proud when his grandfather happened to ask for help "De, please get me a drink." "Oh yes", he got a drink from his grandfather's glass. After that, his grandfather drank it. He thought he just wanted to get it, but he returned the glass to its original position again. Then his grandfather said thank you, "yes, the same", like that. Alhamdulillah, he always remembers to say thank you, the

same, sorry, the things that I have taught and the family has taught can be responded well and can be practiced well in everyday life. That's a special pleasure for me." (I1, 30, F)

Meanwhile, mothers perceived that other strategies to maintain maternal happiness when interacting with children were interacting with children in full awareness, taking pauses to stabilize emotions if things did not meet expectations, and lowering expectations of children. A state of mindfulness, good management of maternal emotions, and lowering expectations in parenting in order to deal with each situation calmly and wisely, which in turn contributes to maternal happiness. Mindfulness allows mothers to be fully present in the moment with their child, understand their needs and feelings, and respond appropriately, thereby reducing stress and improving the quality of the relationship.

"So we have to be in a state of full awareness, and this is also a state of spirituality, there are also futurnya, the influence of hormones also we also don't worship much, now when holding children when there is yes it is also critical. So it's already a warning, wow I'm about to menstruate, I have to be careful, so it can be predicted." (I3, 31, W)

"... at that moment, if it's like that, actually try to take a pause first, if you really feel burned out, try to take a pause first, you really have to lower your expectations, because we as parents have expectations that you should already understand that he is already this big, he should have been able to do it yesterday, now he can't, we also don't have to lower our expectations if the child's condition doesn't always understand what we want, the child is also still in the learning process, just like us, there are ups and downs." (I3, 31, W)

While there are other strategies mentioned by mothers to stay happy by finding a support system outside the family, such as close friends or friends.

"If I'm bored or tired, I talk/interact with my husband either via chat or in person, and also share stories with friends who understand us." (I1, 31, W)

"But when I'm feeling dizzy, I like to go to my friends, chat, play, whatever. Even though the dedenya also comes with us, we leave him behind, kekeuh (still) we go everywhere." (I2, 25, W)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Mother-child interaction is understood by mothers to be realized in various forms such as physical touch (hugging, kissing), verbal communication through chatting, deeptalk, while undergoing daily activities. This finding supports previous research which states that one of the ways mothers interact positively with their children is through play in daily activities (Ahmad and Zahra, 2024). Tamis-LeMonda et al., (2001); Landry et al., 2006; Ginsburg (2007) mentioned that the quality of child and mother interaction during play has a role in the mother-child relationship and also child development. According to Masrurah (2014), activities that are fun for children and games are central in developing children's language skills. Field (2010) states that positive physical interactions, such as hugs and kisses, can increase children's sense of emotional security and comfort. In addition, being a good listener also provides opportunities for children to feel valued and listened to, which is important for the development of their self-confidence and social skills.

Other forms of mother-child interaction according to mothers, such as through hugs, make children feel loved, cared for, comfortable and safe. Hugs provide warmth and become a cure for fatigue for mothers, while increasing bonding and providing calmness to children. In addition, hugs also function as a positive energy transfer that can relieve children's emotions, and foster a sense of affection and appreciation. In line with the research of Nurhayati et al. (2023) proves that maternal hugs are able to relieve when handling

temper tantrums in early childhood. Likewise, Karim's research (2018) shows that maternal hugs can make children feel comfortable and increase bonding with parents. While Rahmawati and Latifah's (2020) research found that increased mother-child interaction contributed to better children's social-emotional development.

In addition, mothers described that the interaction between mothers and children can be done with the storytelling method. Dewi (2020) suggests that there are several ways to do storytelling, including those done directly or with the help of media. Ngura et al. (2020) stated that early childhood will tend to remember visualizations more easily so that storytelling using pictures or symbols will be more effective. The method can also improve emotional intelligence in early childhood. The results of previous research state that picture storybooks can increase children's knowledge related to the environment and can have an impact on their daily lives (Hsiao, Yuan, and Yu Shih, 2015). Storybooks can also increase good behavior in children (Retnowati, et al., 2018).

Mothers agree that mother-child interaction has a very important role in creating an emotional bond between mother and child. Research by Zhang, et al., (2008) proves that the closeness between mother and child will reduce the risk of a child having antisocial behavior and aggression. Meanwhile, Papalia and Feldman (2014) mentioned that emotional bonding is a delicacy in the quality of relationships that contribute to each other between caregivers and children. Good child psychological development occurs due to secure attachment patterns (Safari & Arysha, 2021). Likewise, Fatimah (2021) states that the emotional bond between mother and child can be interpreted as an attachment that is formed with a series of mediated processes to form the bond, so it is not just naturally formed. This shows that, mother and child interactions are not formed just like that, but can occur and have an impact on mothers and children if the mother and child have a series of interactions.

The results further show that the role of mother-child interaction in shaping children's positive character is implemented through positive parenting, parental role models and synergy, as well as strategies and approaches. Mothers agree that positive parenting can be built with several things, including teaching good values, setting parenting goals, and involving verbal and non-verbal interactions. Good parenting can be the main foundation in shaping children's positive character. Landry et al. (2017) stated that positive interactions carried out with awareness and happiness will have an influence on children's emotional and social development. According to Bornstein (2013), the quality of parental interactions such as full attention, playing together, and instilling moral values are very important in the development of children's character. Hughes and Devine (2019) emphasize the importance of parents in educating children to develop empathy and social responsibility. Providing direct examples, such as teaching children to say thank you after receiving help, helps children to understand and apply kindness values in everyday life (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Collins et al., 2017). In addition, Aisyah (2015) also states that responsive parenting and being fully present when with the child means giving full attention without distractions from electronic devices or other work. This helps children feel valued and safe. Having the right goals in parenting based on religious values such as the Qur'an and As-Sunnah can also provide clear guidance for parents in educating their children, or adjusting their spiritual beliefs. This information was obtained from research informants. Hodge (2018) states that parenting based on spiritual values can help children develop a strong moral identity. This is important in providing clear direction and purpose in educating children as the informants stated that establishing a basis for parenting based on the Qur'an and As-Sunnah will help in adjusting parenting to the development of children's nature at each age stage. Dollahite and Marks (2019) also explained that parenting based on religious values not only helps in the formation of children's

character, but can also strengthen relationships between family members. In addition, they also stated that parenting based on spiritual values will provide a strong moral foundation for children to develop a positive personality and high integrity. In addition, positive verbal and non-verbal interactions can also be an important component in building a strong emotional connection between mother and child. Zhou et al. (2020) showed that verbal interactions, such as saying kind words and telling stories, can improve children's communication skills and emotional understanding. In addition, non-verbal interactions such as hugging, kissing and expressing feelings in a positive way help children feel loved and valued (Morris et al., 2017).

Parents as role models can have a great influence on the formation of children's character. Bandura (1977) in his social learning theory explains that children can learn by imitating their parents' behavior. Therefore, parents who show or model good behavior such as honesty and responsibility will help children in applying these values. This shows the importance of exemplary parenting. Carlo et al. (2018) also emphasized that parents who consistently show good behavior are more likely to have children who behave similarly. Children observe and imitate their parents' behavior in various situations, so it is important for parents to always set a good example. In addition, the synergy between father and mother as well as support from other family members is very important in creating an environment that supports the development of children's positive character. Cabrera et al. (2018) stated that father's involvement in parenting will have a positive impact on children's emotional and social development. Lamb (2010) also emphasized that collaboration between family members in childcare helps create comprehensive support for children.

In addition, in order to achieve optimal positive character development for children, the mothers agreed that the right strategies and approaches are needed. Maintaining consistent discipline, including a regular schedule for eating, playing, and sleeping, is very important in forming good habits in children. Baumrind (1991) stated that consistent discipline helps children develop self-control and regularity, which are important aspects in the formation of positive character. Gershoff et al. (2017) found that consistent and positive discipline was associated with better developmental outcomes in children, including more orderly behavior and the ability to follow rules. This suggests that a consistent and structured approach to discipline is important in helping children develop positive habits and values. Providing encouragement and motivation, such as words of encouragement and praise, is essential for boosting children's morale and confidence. Henderlong and Lepper (2002) state that praise given appropriately can increase children's intrinsic motivation and help them to cope better with challenges. Dweck (2006) in her research on mindset, suggests that praise that focuses on effort and process rather than the end result, can help children develop a growth mindset, where they believe that their abilities can be improved through effort and learning. This is important for developing perseverance and resilience in children. Understanding and responding to children's physical, emotional and psychological needs is also an important component of good parenting. Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecological theory of child development also emphasizes the importance of a supportive environment for children's growth and development. Shonkoff and Garner (2012) found that positive and responsive interactions between parents and children are essential for children's brain development and social-emotional abilities.

The implementation of regular evaluations of the child's character development and the parenting methods applied can also help parents to adjust their approach according to the child's needs and development. Rutter (2012) states that regular evaluations allow parents to identify areas that require improvement and make the necessary adjustments to support child development. Masten and Cicchetti (2010) emphasize the importance of regular evaluation in ensuring that the parenting methods used are effective in shaping

children's character.

Mothers recognize that children are a source of happiness. The affection, emotional closeness of mothers with their children creates a close and loving bond. This interaction provides deep happiness for mothers because they feel a warm and loving relationship. In line with research by Prastuti, Tairas, and Hartini (2020), that children and family are a source of happiness, as well as a source of maternal unhappiness when there are problems related to interactions with spouses and children. Mothers describe that when children respond to maternal interactions with love and appreciation, mothers feel a sense of satisfaction and happiness. The child's appreciation reinforces a sense of being loved, valued and recognized, which is very meaningful to the mother in her role. Moments of mother-child affection, which include where mothers and children share emotional affective (i.e., affective aspects related to emotions, such as emotional support, sharing, and closeness) can increase maternal happiness (Sugiyono and Hong, 2018). Mothers consider their children to be a meaningful source of emotional support when facing life's challenges. Mothers felt calmer and happier when interacting with their children, which directly improved their mood and helped them cope with stress. Sharing stories, both sad and happy, with their children gives mothers the opportunity to pour out their affection and gain peace. The joy of interacting with children also helps mothers distract themselves from their problems, allowing them to think positively and regain their spirits. Children become solace, providing emotional support that makes mothers feel stronger, providing positive energy in living their daily lives. According to mothers, children are a strong source of motivation for mothers to become a better person as well as a learning tool. Interactions with children often require mothers to teach various values and skills, such as discipline and emotional control. This experience encourages mothers to get to know themselves better and explore potentials in themselves that may not have been realized before. Children trigger mothers to continue learning, developing, and controlling themselves, so that motherhood is not only a means to educate but also an avenue for personal growth. This creates a positive cycle where the mother becomes better, happier as an individual and as a parent, inspired by her children.

The research findings also revealed that having time for yourself and developing yourself through studying or pursuing hobbies is also important for mothers. With basic needs met, mothers can enjoy moments with their children more happily and energetically. In line with Currie's (2014) research that showed mothers who get space for themselves, time off from busy schedules and the burden of childcare, and the feeling of doing something to improve physical appearance, have higher happiness. Mothers also recognized that support and synergistic parenting from family members, especially fathers, played an important role in maternal happiness. The presence of a husband who is willing to listen and understand his wife's fatigue in caring for children and going about daily activities provides a sense of being valued and supported. When husbands are actively involved in parenting and share responsibilities, mothers feel less alone in facing parenting challenges. In addition, support from immediate family, such as parents, also provides a sense of security and comfort. Good collaboration within the family creates a harmonious environment, where mothers feel emotionally and physically supported, increasing maternal happiness (Izzo, et al. 2024). Similarly, the research of Karnoni et al. (2024) showed that there is a significant relationship between husband's support for pregnant women's anxiety and between mother-fetus bonding with pregnant women's anxiety. The greater the husband's support, the anxiety of pregnant women decreases and the smaller the mother's anxiety, the stronger the mother-fetus bond. In addition, research by Ansari and Sanaei (2018) proves that the harmonious relationship between father and mother is positively related to increasing the happiness of mothers who have children with special needs. Further research findings show

that maternal happiness also arises from simple activities that mothers consider as precious moments. Similar to research by Izzo et al. (2024) identified several factors that increase maternal happiness including when mothers enjoy moments with family such as activities outside the home, trips to the movies, cooking together, and playing with children.

Another finding in this study is that mothers make the aspect of religiosity an important foundation so that mothers remain positive in looking at life and happy in their role as mothers. Research by Prastuti, Tairas, and Hartini (2020) proved the same thing that mothers involve aspects of religiosity such as learning to accept, learn to forgive, be sincere, and be grateful for all of God's gifts as internal factors that influence maternal happiness. Even research on mothers with children with special needs proves that high gratitude can reduce maternal stress (Ati et al., 2015). Mothers perceive that children need a happy mother to create a positive and supportive environment for growth and development. According to the mothers, maternal happiness greatly influences interactions with the child, as a happy mother can manage emotions well, providing the necessary attention, patience and love. When mothers feel calm and content, interactions with children become more pleasant and loving, which in turn makes children happier. This happiness is reciprocal, where a happy mother makes the child happy, and the child's happiness also adds to the mother's happiness. This is also believed by mothers as a form of behavior taught by religion in order to get rewards. Similarly, research by Cheng et al. (2018) which shows that maternal negative emotional expressions are positively related to children's negative emotions. If the mother is unhappy and shows negative expressions, the child also responds negatively. While research by Midgette et al. (2022) revealed that maternal happiness affects the way mothers make people around them happy.

Mothers seeing their children grow well and exhibit positive behaviors gives them a sense of satisfaction and happiness. Children's achievements become a reflection of the mother's success in educating, which increases her sense of pride and happiness. Meanwhile, research by Berger and Spiess (2011) showed that maternal happiness and life satisfaction influenced a decrease in behavioral problems and an increase in cognitive performance of pre-school children in Germany. Similarly, research by Heo and Moon (2023) proved that the happiness of mothers as primary caregivers affects the development of children's empathy and caring behavior. Another study supports the research findings, that warmth parenting behavior, maternal happiness in interacting with children is positively related to the achievement of children's social competence (Kyoung 2024).

Meanwhile, mothers perceived that other strategies to maintain maternal happiness when interacting with children were interacting with children in full awareness, taking pauses to stabilize emotions if things did not meet expectations, and lowering expectations of children. A state of mindfulness, good management of maternal emotions, and lowering expectations in parenting in order to deal with each situation calmly and wisely, which in turn contributes to maternal happiness. Mindfulness allows mothers to be fully present in the moment with their children, understand their needs and feelings, and provide appropriate responses, thereby reducing stress and improving relationship quality. This is in line with research by Somaya et al. (2023) which proves that the mindfulness program is effective in increasing maternal beliefs, parenting practices, positive changes in child behavior and mindfulness in parenting and reducing psychological distress in mothers studied related to ADHD children. In addition, by lowering expectations, mothers can accept their children as they are, appreciate every little development, and reduce the pressure and frustration that can arise from overly high expectations. This not only creates a more positive and

supportive environment for the child's growth, but also increases the mother's satisfaction and happiness in her role, as she feels more capable and at ease in her day-to-day life.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that all informants and husbands' ages are categorized as young adults, with the lowest age being 25 years old and the highest age being 31 years old. All informants work as housewives. The three informants are of diverse ethnicities, namely Sundanese, Madurese and Javanese. There is one informant with a senior high school education, while the other two informants have a bachelor's degree. The occupations of the informants' husbands vary from laborer, contractor, to private sector. The amount of income of the informants' husbands also varied, ranging from 5-20 million. Most informants have one child, with only one informant having two children. The gender of the informants' children is predominantly male, while one informant's child is female. The informants' length of marriage is between 5-10 years with the smallest number of family members consisting of three people, and the largest number of four people.

Based on mothers' knowledge of mother-child interaction, it is divided into three themes, namely, forms of interaction, ways of interaction, and the role of interaction. Forms of mother-child interaction include various aspects that play an important role in the emotional and character development of children. First, physical touch such as hugging and kissing not only shows affection, but also provides a sense of security and comfort for the child. Second, verbal communication in the form of chatting, deep talk, and daily activities such as eating together or reading storybooks bridge the understanding and emotional closeness between mother and child. Third, the emotional support provided by mothers, such as comforting when children are sad and providing praise and encouragement, is very important for building children's self-confidence and happiness. Fourth, education through storytelling not only educates but also teaches moral values and enriches children's imagination. Fifth, discipline and consistent guidance in rules help children learn about responsibility and boundaries. Finally, socialization by taking children to public places helps children learn to interact with others and understand their social environment.

Based on the involvement of the role of mother-child interaction in shaping children's positive character, the research identified three themes, namely positive parenting, parental role models and synergy, and strategies and approaches. In positive parenting, it was found that good parenting involves teaching good values such as honesty, courtesy, responsibility and empathy. Mothers were present with full awareness and familiarized the children with positive actions. According to mothers, it is important to set parenting goals based on the Qur'an and Sunnah to shape children's morals. In addition, mothers agreed that verbal and non-verbal interactions, such as using kind words, telling positive stories, and expressing affection through hugs and kisses, greatly influence children's character development. The results also showed that positive parental role modeling and the synergy between mother and father and other family members in parenting contributed to children's positive character development. In addition, mothers agree that the strategies and approaches for shaping children's positive character are consistent discipline, providing encouragement and motivation, caring and trying to meet children's needs, and periodic evaluation of children's character.

The results further show that mother-child interaction has an impact on maternal happiness. Maternal involvement in the child's life through interaction contributes to maternal happiness through emotional bonding and support, religiosity, and achieving satisfactory child development. The mother's emotional bond and support including the child is one of the sources of happiness for the mother; affection, closeness,

and deep love for the child provides great happiness, while feeling love and appreciation from the child provides a feeling of satisfaction and happiness; the presence of the child increases the value of the mother as an individual, as well as being a source of emotional support when facing life challenges; the child is also a source of motivation for the mother to become a better person; the fulfillment of the mother's basic needs contributes to her happiness, and simple activities with the child can be precious moments that make the mother happy. In addition, support and synergy in parenting from family members, especially fathers, also play an important role in maternal happiness. Another important finding is that mothers make the aspect of religiosity an important foundation for mothers to remain positive in looking at life and happy in their role as mothers. Mothers see their children grow well and show positive behavior, giving them a feeling of satisfaction and happiness. Their children's achievements were a reflection of the mother's success in educating them, which increased their sense of pride and happiness.

Overall, a mother's happiness in fulfilling her role will greatly affect her child's development. To maintain the happiness of mothers, it is important to interact with their children in full awareness, manage emotions, synergize with fathers and other family members, and not set excessive expectations in order to cope well with every situation. This not only creates a positive environment for the child's growth but also increases the mother's satisfaction and happiness in her role.

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