



Parental Moral and Instrumental Support for Girls with Dual Achievement in Academics and Football at SD Muhammadiyah Sapan Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This article explores how parents provide moral and instrumental support to girls who achieve simultaneously in academic learning and competitive football at SD Muhammadiyah Sapan Yogyakarta, an Islamic primary school that encourages both scholastic excellence and sports achievement. The study is situated within a multicultural and multireligious educational context in Indonesia, where gender norms and religious values strongly shape expectations for girls' participation in sport. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and school document analysis. The participants consisted of the parents of a high-achieving girl who excels in both academic learning and football, the class teacher, and the football coach. Data were analysed using an interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation across different sources and techniques. The findings show that parental support operates through two interrelated dimensions. First, moral support is expressed in continuous encouragement, empathy, religiously grounded meaning-making, and the affirmation that the child's worth is not reduced to winning or losing. Second, instrumental support is manifested through the provision of facilities, transportation, time management, and coordination with teachers and coaches so that training schedules and academic obligations remain balanced. Parents also negotiate gender expectations and Islamic values, interpreting football as a space to practise discipline, cooperation, and responsibility that are consistent with religious teachings. The study concludes that parental moral and instrumental support is crucial for sustaining girls' dual achievement in academics and football while at the same time promoting inclusive interpretations of gender and religion in school and family life. The article recommends strengthening school-family partnerships to design programmes that integrate academic targets, sports development, and character education in a holistic manner.

Keywords: Parental Support; Girls Football; Academic Achievement; Islamic Primary School; Indonesia; Youth Sport

Introduction

Primary education has a strategic role in shaping the character and life chances of children in Indonesia. Schools are expected not only to develop academic competence but also to foster physical,

social, and emotional growth so that learners can participate productively in a rapidly changing, plural society. In this context, families and schools become two key institutions that work together to nurture children's potential. The quality of parental support is often a decisive factor that determines whether children are able to optimise the learning opportunities provided by the school.

Research in many countries consistently shows that parental involvement has a positive impact on students' academic achievement. A meta-analysis by Castro and colleagues, which synthesised findings from 21 studies, demonstrates that parental involvement is significantly associated with higher academic performance across a range of school subjects and indicators (Castro et al., 2015). Beyond direct academic supervision, such involvement includes emotional encouragement, attention to children's daily routines, and active communication with teachers. In Muslim-majority contexts such as Indonesia, this involvement is usually intertwined with religious values, expectations regarding filial obedience, and cultural conceptions of success that combine worldly and spiritual dimensions.

At the same time, there is a growing body of research that shows how parental social support shapes children's engagement in physical activity and sport. Wright et al. (2010), for example, show that parental modelling and social support influence adolescents' participation in physical activity, particularly when parents take part in activities together and provide tangible support such as equipment and transportation. In Indonesia, Ardiansyah (2023) found that the role of parents in supporting the sports achievement of football school students in Sleman Regency remains suboptimal, which can limit the development of children's sporting potential. These findings indicate that parental support in sport is not merely technical; it is deeply embedded in family values, time allocation, and socio-economic resources.

The issue becomes even more complex when the young athlete is a girl and the sport is culturally coded as masculine, such as football. International studies reveal that girls who take part in sport often experience multiple benefits in terms of confidence, resilience, and leadership skills, yet they also face structural and cultural barriers, including gender stereotypes and limited access to facilities (McIlmoyle et al., 2024). In Indonesia, similar challenges appear in everyday school life, particularly in religious-based schools where dress codes, notions of modesty, and expectations of femininity may influence how adults perceive girls' participation in competitive sport.

SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta is an Islamic primary school that has a strong tradition of academic excellence and rich extracurricular programmes, including a girls football team. Some students from this school show dual achievement: they obtain high academic results while also reaching outstanding performance in football at district or provincial levels. Their success is not solely the result of individual talent or school programmes, but is closely related to the presence of parents who consistently provide support at home and in training environments.

However, most existing studies on parental support in Indonesia either focus on academic achievement (for example Irawati, 2023) or on sports achievement in general without paying specific attention to girls in football and to the way academic and sporting achievements are negotiated simultaneously (Ardiansyah, 2023; Kurniawati & Satwika, 2023). The intersection between parental involvement, gender norms, religious values, and dual achievement in academics and football at the primary school level remains under-researched. There is still little understanding of how parents construct and practise "support" when their daughters pursue excellence in both learning and football within an Islamic school context.

This article seeks to fill that gap by describing and analysing how parents provide moral and instrumental support for girls who achieve in both academic learning and football at SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta. Specifically, the study addresses the following questions: (1) How is parental moral support expressed in everyday interactions related to schoolwork and football training? (2) What forms of instrumental support are provided by parents to balance school obligations, football practice, competitions, and family life? (3) How do parents interpret and negotiate religious values and gender expectations when supporting their daughters' dual achievement? By answering these questions, the article aims to contribute to the broader discourse on parental involvement in multicultural and

multireligious education, and to provide practical insights for schools that wish to strengthen collaboration with families in supporting girls' full potential.

Literature Review

Parental involvement and academic achievement

Parental involvement is generally understood as the set of behaviours and attitudes through which parents participate in and support their children's learning at home and at school. Castro et al. (2015) distinguish several dimensions of parental involvement, including academic socialisation (communicating expectations and values about education), home-based involvement (helping with homework, providing a study environment), and school-based involvement (attending school meetings, communicating with teachers). Their meta-analysis shows that academic socialisation and high expectations are particularly strong predictors of student achievement, suggesting that the meanings parents attach to education are as important as the concrete behaviours they display.

Indonesian research also highlights the centrality of parents in shaping students' learning motivation and academic performance. Irawati (2023), for instance, found that parents at MTs Al Idrus Bogor act as motivators, supervisors, and facilitators who create conducive learning environments at home. Parents who frequently monitor their children's progress, provide emotional encouragement, and ensure the availability of learning resources tend to have children with better academic outcomes. These findings are in line with the views of classical educational thinkers in Indonesia who argue that the family is the first and most enduring educational institution (Soedijarto, 1993; Tilaar, 2000).

Parental support, social support, and youth sport

Beyond the academic domain, parental support is a key component of social support that influences children's engagement in physical activity and sport. Wright et al. (2010) identify two important mechanisms: role modelling and social support. Parents who themselves are physically active and who participate in activities with their children provide powerful examples, while emotional encouragement and tangible assistance (such as transportation and equipment) help children to overcome barriers to participation. Systematic reviews further show that parental social support is strongly associated with youth physical activity across different contexts (for example, see the review cited in Wright et al., 2010).

Recent studies in Indonesia provide more specific evidence regarding parental support for youth sport. Ardiansyah (2023) found that most parents of football school students in Sleman Regency provide only moderate support for their children's sporting endeavours, with a substantial proportion categorised as "less supportive". This limited support is manifested in irregular attendance at training sessions, lack of attention to nutritional needs, and minimal encouragement during competitions. Conversely, research by Kurniawati and Satwika (2023) on parents of high-achieving badminton athletes shows that strong parental support—both emotional and instrumental—plays a crucial role in sustaining athletes' motivation, discipline, and resilience in the face of training demands and competition pressure.

Gender, religion, and parental support for girls in sport

International literature on parental support in girls' sport emphasises the complex interplay between support, protection, and gender norms. McIlmoyle et al. (2024), studying parents of high-performing female youth golfers, reported that parents provide a mixture of emotional, informational, and logistical support, while simultaneously negotiating concerns about pressure, burnout, and the preservation of family relationships. Parents also continuously adjust their support strategies as their daughters progress from early participation to higher-level competition. These findings suggest that parental support is dynamic and responsive to the child's developmental stage and performance level.

In Muslim-majority contexts, parental support for girls in sport is linked not only to gender expectations but also to interpretations of religious teachings. Parents may worry about modesty, safety,

and appropriate interaction between boys and girls, particularly in sports like football that are traditionally dominated by males. At the same time, many Islamic educators argue that physical activity is an important component of holistic education and that sport can be a medium for cultivating discipline, cooperation, gratitude, and respect for others (Nata, 2010; Musya'adah, 2020). How parents reconcile these considerations in their everyday decisions regarding girls' participation in sport is an important question for research on Islamic and multicultural education.

Moral and instrumental dimensions of parental support

Drawing on the broader literature on social support, this study conceptualises parental support in two interrelated dimensions: moral and instrumental. Moral support refers to expressions of care, empathy, recognition, and value affirmation that strengthen the child's sense of self-worth and motivation. It overlaps with emotional and esteem support in social support theory. Instrumental support refers to tangible assistance and practical actions, such as providing equipment, financing participation, arranging transportation, helping children manage their time, and coordinating with teachers and coaches. Both dimensions are necessary for sustaining children's engagement in demanding activities such as competitive sport while maintaining academic responsibilities.

This conceptual framework allows the analysis to capture not only what parents do (instrumental support) but also how they understand and narrate their support in relation to religious beliefs, gender norms, and aspirations for their daughters' future (moral support). In the context of SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta, where school culture is shaped by Islamic values and by a commitment to educational excellence, examining these dimensions can shed light on how families and schools co-construct opportunities for girls' dual achievement in academics and football.

Research Method

Research design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a single instrumental case study focus. The case selected was a girl who achieved highly in both academic learning and football at SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta. The case study approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth, contextual understanding of how parental support is constructed and practised in everyday life, particularly in relation to the specific school culture and family context.

Research site and participants

The research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta, a well-known Islamic primary school in the city of Yogyakarta that has a strong academic reputation and active extracurricular programmes. The school provides structured football training for students and routinely participates in inter-school competitions. The focal participant was a girl in the upper grades who had won several football competitions while maintaining consistently high academic achievement.

To capture different perspectives, the participants in this study included: (1) the girl's parents, who are the primary providers of support at home; (2) the girl's class teacher, who observes her learning and behaviour in the classroom; and (3) the football coach, who supervises training and competition. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling, with the main criterion being that they were directly involved in or knowledgeable about the focal case.

Data collection

Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Separate interviews were conducted with each parent, the class teacher, and the football coach. Interview guides were prepared to explore forms of moral and instrumental support, perceptions of the girl's dual achievement, time management strategies, and the role of religious

and gender values in decision-making. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' informed consent.

Observation was conducted in several settings, including the classroom, football training sessions, and informal interactions before and after school. Field notes focused on how parents accompany their daughter, how the teacher and coach communicate with the parents, and how the girl herself responds to academic and sporting demands. School documents such as report cards, certificates of achievement, schedules, and written school policies on extracurricular activities were also collected to provide contextual information.

Data analysis and trustworthiness

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves three interrelated components: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, then read repeatedly to identify initial codes related to forms of support, parental meanings, and contextual factors. Codes were then grouped into categories and themes, particularly around moral and instrumental support, negotiation of gender and religious values, and strategies for balancing academics and football.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, several strategies were employed. First, data triangulation was conducted across different sources (parents, teacher, coach) and techniques (interview, observation, documents). Second, member checking was carried out by presenting a summary of the preliminary findings to the parents and teacher to obtain their feedback and corrections. Third, an audit trail was maintained through systematic documentation of field notes, analytic memos, and coding decisions. Ethical principles were observed by obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' anonymity, and ensuring that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time.

Results and Discussion

Moral support: Affirmation, empathy, and religious meaning

The analysis shows that the parents provide strong moral support that centres on affirmation, empathy, and the integration of religious meaning into their daughter's learning and sporting experiences. Both parents consistently frame academic learning and football as forms of worship and gratitude for the abilities granted by God. They often remind their daughter that effort, sincerity, and honesty are more important than the final score, and that winning and losing are both opportunities to learn. This framing helps the child to perceive challenges in school and sport not as threats, but as arenas to practise patience, discipline, and responsibility.

The parents' moral support is also evident in their day-to-day communication. When their daughter feels tired, anxious before a match, or disappointed with her performance, they listen attentively and validate her emotions rather than minimising them. They praise her persistence, fairness, and teamwork more than the number of goals scored or academic rankings. Such emphasis on process-oriented values resonates with findings by Castro et al. (2015) that academic socialisation – including expectations and meanings attached to learning – has a stronger impact on achievement than merely checking homework. It also echoes Wright et al. (2010), who show that emotional encouragement from parents can sustain adolescents' motivation to engage in physical activity.

In addition, the parents consciously resist negative comments or stereotypes from extended family or neighbours who consider football to be a "boy's sport" or who worry that sport will undermine academic achievement. They respond by highlighting their daughter's achievements in both domains and by explaining that discipline learned in training helps her to organise her study time more effectively. This moral stance, which affirms the daughter's rights and capacities, is consistent with the findings of McIlmoyle et al. (2024) that supportive parents of female youth athletes often position themselves as

advocates who protect their daughters from external pressure while still encouraging autonomy and commitment.

Instrumental support: Facilities, logistics, and time management

Alongside moral support, the parents provide substantial instrumental support that enables their daughter to participate fully in both school and football. They allocate part of the family budget to buy proper football shoes, jerseys, and training equipment, and they ensure that their daughter has nutritious meals, especially before and after training sessions. They routinely accompany her to training and matches, adjusting their work schedules when necessary. When they are unable to attend, they coordinate with relatives or trusted neighbours so that their daughter still feels accompanied and safe.

A particularly important form of instrumental support is time management. The parents help their daughter to create a daily routine that integrates academic tasks, religious activities, rest, and football practice. Homework is scheduled before or after training sessions depending on match schedules, and the parents monitor implementation without being overly controlling. When major competitions approach, they discuss with the class teacher to anticipate potential absences and to arrange alternative times for tests or assignments. This collaborative stance mirrors the practices documented by Irawati (2023), in which parents act as facilitators who actively create a conducive learning environment, and by Kurniawati and Satwika (2023), who emphasise the role of parents in organising training schedules and educational commitments for high-achieving badminton athletes.

The crucial role of such instrumental support is also apparent in comparison with the broader context described by Ardiansyah (2023), who found that many parents of football school students in Sleman provide only limited support, leading to irregular attendance and low motivation among young athletes. In contrast, the case examined in this study illustrates how consistent logistical support and clear routines can reduce the friction between school obligations and sporting activities, thereby allowing dual achievement to flourish.

Negotiating gender, religion, and the meaning of success

The findings also reveal that parental support for the girl's dual achievement is shaped by ongoing negotiation of gender norms and religious values. Initially, some relatives expressed concern that playing football would make the girl "too masculine" or that frequent outdoor activities might conflict with ideals of modesty. The parents responded by carefully choosing a school and football environment that enforces appropriate dress codes, emphasises fair play and respect, and maintains clear boundaries between boys and girls in training and competition. They also stress that physical strength, courage, and leadership are not exclusively male traits, but human qualities that can be developed in line with Islamic teachings.

In discussions with their daughter, the parents frame academic achievement and football success as complementary rather than competing goals. They repeatedly emphasise that academic learning remains a priority because it opens future educational opportunities, while football is valued as a medium to build character, health, and social skills. This stance helps the child to understand that her identity is not reduced to being an "athlete" or a "top student" alone, but that both dimensions are part of a broader process of self-development. It also aligns with Islamic educational perspectives that aim to integrate physical, intellectual, and moral development (Nata, 2010; Musya'adah, 2020).

From a multicultural and multireligious standpoint, the parents' attitudes contribute to an inclusive school climate. By supporting their daughter's participation in football while upholding religious values and respecting diverse peer backgrounds, they implicitly model tolerance, cooperation, and respect for difference. Their daughter's presence in the girls football team also challenges stereotypes about what Muslim girls can or cannot do, thereby widening the horizon of possibilities for other students. This dynamic illustrates how parental support in a specific family can have broader implications for school culture and for the promotion of gender equity in sport.

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that moral and instrumental parental support are mutually reinforcing. Moral support provides the emotional foundation and value framework that give meaning to the child's efforts, while instrumental support translates these values into concrete opportunities and resources. When both dimensions are present and aligned with inclusive interpretations of religion and gender, girls are more likely to succeed in both academics and sport and to develop as confident, reflective, and socially responsible individuals.

Conclusion and Implications

This study set out to explore how parents provide moral and instrumental support to a girl who achieves in both academic learning and football at SD Muhammadiyah Saren Yogyakarta. The analysis indicates that parental support in this case is characterised by (1) strong moral encouragement rooted in religious values and process-oriented praise; (2) consistent instrumental assistance through the provision of facilities, transportation, time management, and coordination with teachers and coaches; and (3) active negotiation of gender norms and religious teachings to legitimise girls' participation in football while maintaining academic priority.

These findings contribute to the literature on parental involvement by showing how the dimensions identified in previous studies on academic achievement (Castro et al., 2015; Irawati, 2023) and youth sport (Wright et al., 2010; Ardiansyah, 2023; Kurniawati & Satwika, 2023; McIlmoyle et al., 2024) can be integrated in the concrete experience of a Muslim family in Indonesia. The case illustrates that parental support is not a static set of behaviours, but a dynamic process of meaning-making in which parents continuously adjust their strategies in response to their child's development, school demands, and social expectations.

Practically, the study implies that schools, especially religious-based schools, need to build systematic partnerships with parents to support students who pursue dual achievement in academics and sport. Teachers and school leaders can initiate regular communication with parents of student-athletes, jointly design study and training schedules, and integrate values from sport – such as teamwork, perseverance, and fair play – into classroom learning and character education programmes. Coaches can be involved in school-level discussions about student welfare, ensuring that training intensity remains balanced with academic responsibilities and health considerations.

For families, the findings underscore the importance of combining moral and instrumental support. Emotional encouragement and value-based dialogue without concrete logistical arrangements may leave children struggling to translate ideals into daily routines, while technical support without empathy may lead to burnout or excessive pressure. Parents are encouraged to listen to their children's experiences, recognise their emotions, and involve them in planning schedules and goals so that support is experienced as collaborative rather than controlling.

As a qualitative single case study, this research has limitations in terms of generalisability. Future studies could involve multiple cases across different schools and regions, compare experiences between boys and girls, or examine how socio-economic differences shape parental support for dual achievement. Nevertheless, the present study offers a nuanced picture of how one Muslim family navigates the opportunities and tensions of supporting a daughter who excels in both academics and football, providing insights that may be relevant for educators, parents, and policymakers who are committed to promoting inclusive, holistic education in multicultural and multireligious societies.

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