

A PROFILE OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY THE CHILD

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Abstract

The amount of research on fathers has been increasing in the past three decades, but most research is still focused on mother involvement in the family. In reality, fathers also have a huge impact on the development of their children. Therefore, there is a need for special research on father involvement in parenting. The aim of the study was to examine the profile of father involvement as perceived by the child. The study is conducted in the Indonesian province of Aceh, where Islamic values lead the social life of the residents as well as government policies. This study uses descriptive-quantitative methods, taking in respondents using the quota sampling technique (n=500). The results showed that among families in Aceh, there is father involvement within the instrumental dimension. In other words, fathers showed a high involvement in the range of 'always involved,' in areas such as moral and career development, developing a sense of responsibility, independence, and discipline, and providing the child's needs. This indicates that the role of the father in Aceh was consistent with the 'father-breadwinner' family model. The gender variable has a significant influence on father involvement variable.

Keywords: Father Involvement, Fathering, Parenting

INTRODUCTION

The role of the father in the family experienced significant changes in the past two centuries. Two to three centuries ago, the father played the role of the breadwinner and the teacher of moral and religious values for his children (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017). This is supported by Pleck's (2010) statement that during the 18th and 19th centuries, fathers were seen as the most important source of moral development in children, while mothers took a great portion in nurturing and caring for the children. In the 1950s, the ideal family model consisting of a father as the breadwinner and a mother as the homemaker arose (Day & Lamb, 2004). Along with the shift of agrarian society to a more industrial one, in the 1970s the pay for men's labor experienced a decline, and women started to enter the workforce in increasing numbers. The nurturing function that was previously dominated by the mother started to be shared between both parents. This situation encourages the emergence of the concept of the new father, the nurturing father. The concept of the new father understands that there was a psychological impact on the child by showing affection more often and spending more time playing with the child (Day & Lamb, 2004).

Indonesia, as a country that also experienced the impact of industrial development, views the father as the leader and decision maker, while the mother has the main function of the teacher even when she works outside the house (Net Industries, 2009). The mother is responsible for the upkeep of household, education, and childcare, while the father acts as the provider for the family (Utomo, Reimondos, Utomo, McDonald, &

Hull, 2009). In most parts of Asia, including Indonesia, fathers are seen as hard-working men who provide the needs of the family but are emotionally distant from their children (Seward, Stanley-Stevens, & Yeatts, 2013). Until today, the education system in Indonesia still employs textbooks that strongly support the father-breadwinner family model (Utomo, McDonald, Hull, Utomo, & Son, 2015).

Although research on fathers has continued to expand in the past three decades, most research on families is more focused on the mother (Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). It is not unreasonable that Lamb described the father as “the forgotten contributor” to the child’s development (In Rahmi, 2015). Father involvement in parenting refers to all forms of the father’s contribution to the child’s life (Dick, 2004).

To understand a father involvement in a community, it is necessary to understand the culture of the community. LaRossa revealed that local culture would influence how the father responds to the function of his role and how the father should behave (in Dick, 2004). Aceh is a province in Indonesia with the highest percentage of the Muslim population and implements regional laws based on Islamic law (Qanun). In family life, the people of Aceh adhere to Islamic values set in the Quran and hadith. The obligation of parents is to educate and ensure children’s development in physical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual aspects, especially the teaching of moral values based on the Quran and religious practices (Badruzzaman in Afriani, Baharudin, & Deuraseh, 2012). Islam teaches parents tenderness and compassion in educating children. As a matter of fact, in Islam, educating the children is not an absolute obligation of the mother. Instead, the Quran tells us more about the role of the father in educating the children, for example, the chapter Al-Baqarah, verse 132 and the chapter Yusuf, verse 67 which tell the stories of Luqman, the prophet Yaqub, and the prophet Ibrahim in educating their children (Akin, 2012). Based on these considerations, the researchers want to examine father involvement in parenting as perceived by the children in Aceh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Finley and Schwartz (2004), father involvement is all forms of father’s contributions in various aspects of a child’s life. This is in line with Lamb’s view of the father’s role as a multidimensional construct which includes affective, cognitive, ethical, observable behaviors, and indirect forms of involvement such as providing, supporting the mother, etc. (in Hawkins, Palkovitz, Bradford, Christiansen, Day, & Call, 2002). In more detail, Pleck (2010) emphasizes that father involvement is the behavior carried out by a man towards his child which includes positive activities, warm and responsive behavior, control, care, and responsibility for the child.

Finley and Schwartz (2004) divided the father involvement into three dimensions:

- a) Expressive dimension: Fathers’ involvement in this dimension relates to activities that involve the emotional aspect, sharing stories and hobbies, and fun activities that stimulate physical, social, and spiritual development.
- b) Instrumental dimension: Father involvement in the child’s life in nature which is to educate, care, protect, and discipline in the context of career development, moral/ethical, independence, and responsibility.
- c) Monitoring/Advising: To teach and provide guidance to the children to develop competence and intellect.

In this study, the researchers selected respondents of the emerging adulthood age. This age is marked by the emergence of cognitive quality developments that are not found in adolescence. One thing that develops in the cognitive aspect is reflective judgment, the ability of individuals to evaluate using logical evidence and arguments accurately. This makes them more valid when assessing a situation or problem. Therefore, the age of emerging adulthood is the most appropriate age to assess parental care received so far.

METHOD

This study is a form of descriptive-quantitative research. The population in this study were with aged 18 to 25 years who are Acehnese. Sampling technique using a quota sampling technique for surveying 500 respondents. Father involvement was measured by The Father Involvement Scale developed by Finley and Schwartz (2004). The scale consists of 20 items which are derived from the three dimensions of father involvement; expressive, instrumental, and advising/mentoring. This scale consists of two parts of scales; first, *reported involvement* that focuses on how much father involvement is received. Second, the *desired involvement* that focuses on how much father involvement is desired. The mean is used for normally distributed data, and the median is used for data that is not normally distributed (Howell, 2010). Data analysis in this study used descriptive analysis, the t-test, and multiple regression analysis using the program SPSS version 21 for Windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To get a general idea about the research data can be seen in table 1 where there is a characteristic of respondents. A large portion of the respondents, as many as 19.8%, whereas 22 years old. The majority of the study respondents we female totaling at 362 students (72.4%), while the males we only 138 students (27.6%). More respondents do not live with parents, at 319 students (63.8%), compared to the ones who live with their parents, at 181 students (36.2%). The average age of the father was 53.50 years, and the average family income is Rp. 5,267,280.00 per month. The majority of the respondents have a father with a Bachelor's degree at 171 fathers, while only 12 fathers have a doctoral degree.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

No.	Characteristics	Category	F	%	SD	
1	Age ($M=20,50$)				1,88	
			18	95		19
			19	80		16
			20	79		15,8
			21	79		15,8
			22	99		19,8
			23	38		7,6
			24	16		3,2
			25	14		2,8
2	Sex	Male	138	27,6		
		Female	362	72,4		

3	Living situation	Living with parents	181	36,2
		Not living with parents	319	63,8
4	Father's age ($M=53,50$)			5,78
5	Father's education	6 th grade	29	5,8
		9 th grade	28	5,6
		High school	155	31
		Associate's degree	38	7,6
		Bachelor's degree	171	34,2
		Master's degree	67	13,4
		Doctoral degree	12	2,4

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of father involvement received by the child (reported involvement)

Dimension	Mean	The frequency of Total Score > Mean	Percentage (%)
Expressive	32,7	230	54,7
Instrumental	35,5	236	56,2
Mentoring	17,5	229	54,5

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of father involvement desired by the child (desired involvement)

Dimension	Median	The frequency of Total Score > Median	Percentage (%)
Expressive	35	200	47,6
Instrumental	37	185	44
Mentoring	19	161	38,3

Table 3 above shows the use of the median as the score benchmark. This is done because desired involvement scores are not normally distributed. It was found that 47.6 percent of respondents want their father to be more involved in the expressive dimension, 44 percent want their father to be more involved in the instrumental dimension, and 38.3 percent want their father to be more involved in the mentoring dimension.

The t-test is carried out to determine the difference in each dimension on the reported involvement scale and the desired involvement scale. Table 4 shows the t-test results on the received involvement scale and the desired involvement scale.

Table 4. Score differences between reported involvement and desired involvement

Dimension	Scale	Mean	t (df)	Sig.
Expressive	Reported	32,7	-4,43 (807,5)	0,00*
	Desired	34,2		
Instrumental	Reported	35,5	0,87 (726,3)	0,38

	Desired	35,2		
Mentoring	Reported	17,4	-1,79 (789,1)	0,07
	Desired	17,7		

*p<0,05

Based on the results of the t-test, only the expressive dimension indicates a significant difference between the reported involvement and the desired involvement. As for the rest, the instrumental dimension and the mentoring dimension show no significant differences between the reported involvement and the desired involvement.

Furthermore, to find out the extent of the difference between the reported involvement and the desired involvement on the expressive dimension, Cohen's D value is used. It showed that the expressive dimension is 0.003, in ranges between 0 to 1. The closer the value to 1, the greater the difference obtained. It can be concluded that on the expressive dimension, there is a small difference between the reported involvement and the desired involvement.

Demographic Variables Affecting Father Involvement (Reported Involvement)

Further regression testing was carried out to see the effects of demographic variables on reported father involvement. Before carrying out the test using SPSS, the assumption test is carried out first, consisting of normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests. There are 80 extreme data in the reported involvement scale and the desired involvement scale which disrupt the data as a whole, so they are excluded from the test. The testing is carried out using only the date from 420 respondents.

After all assumption tests have been fulfilled, multiple regression analysis is carried out to determine the effect of the child's age, sex, living situation, father's age, father's education, and family income on father involvement received by the child. Table 5 below shows the results of multiple regression analysis conducted to see the effect of these demographic variables on the total score on the variable of father involvement received by the child.

Table 5. Demographic variables affecting father involvement (reported involvement)

Variable	B	sig
(Constant)	85,91	0,00
Respondent's age	-0,36	0,11
Respondent's sex	3,94	0,00*
Living situation	1,66	0,06
Father's age	0,01	0,88
Family income	8,95	0,43
Father's education		
9 th grade	-2,49	0,34
High school	2,67	0,17
University	2,80	0,14
R		0,27
R ²		0,74
F		4,09
ΔR ²		0,56

* $p < 0,05$

Based on the table above, it was found that only sex had a significant influence on father involvement received by the child with a regression coefficient value of $p=0.00$ ($p < 0.05$).

The profile of father involvement is specifically established based on the analysis of the data on the reported involvement scale because the scale shows an assessment of father involvement in the care received by the respondent. Based on the data collected, respondents received quite high involvement in the expressive dimension, in the range of 'often involved' to 'always involved,' especially on spiritual development items and protection items. The spiritual development items refer to father involvement in influencing his child's spiritual strength. This shows how the Acehnese father upholds religious values in his care, in accordance with the Islamic principle that the father holds a great responsibility in improving the quality of the faith of his family (Halihurrahman, 2016), which is expressed in his child's spiritual development. Brotherson and Dollahite (2005) found that the bond between a father and his child may become stronger through spiritual activities such as praying together.

Furthermore, respondents scored very high in the instrumental dimension. Overall, respondents received involvement in the range of 'often involved' to 'always involved' in ethical/moral development, career development, developing a sense of responsibility, providing material needs, developing independence, protection, and discipline. On the items on ethical/moral development, developing a sense of responsibility, and protection, the respondents, scored higher than the other items. The dominance of father involvement in the instrumental dimension is also driven by the number of items on that dimension that are relevant to the function of the role of the father in the traditional sense (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), which is still applied by fathers in Aceh.

Meanwhile, in the mentoring dimension, respondents considered their fathers to be involved in intellectual development, developing competence, guiding/educating, and giving advice. This shows how the father functions as the most respected figure in the family. In this regard, Akin (2012) explains that Islam teaches fathers to educate and advise their children. These Islamic's concept has become the basis of the way fathers in Aceh behave.

The profile of father involvement in Aceh is in the instrumental dimension. These results are supported by Finley and Schwartz (2006) who explain that fathers play a higher role in instrumental functions such as providing material needs, applying discipline, and protection. This clearly shows that the father-breadwinner ideal is closely attached to the culture and society in Indonesia that is still embraced by the fathers in Aceh.

Based on the percentage of father involvement as desired by the child, in each dimension, it showed that the child wants the father to be more involved, especially in the expressive dimension, rather than instrumental and mentoring dimensions. This can be explained from the results of the t-test conducted to find the differences

between the dimensions on the reported involvement scale and the desired involvement scale. The results showed that only the expressive dimension has a significant difference between the reported involvement scale and the desired involvement scale. It means that the respondents felt that the Acehnese father is not expressive enough. The father has not been able to express his attention to his children emotionally, and the child has not been able to perceive the father's behavior as a form of expressive involvement. Respondents want their fathers to be more emotionally involved in aspects of their development and life.

Regarding expressive functions, Seward, Stanley-Stevens, and Yeatts, (2013) states that in most parts of Asia, including Indonesia, fathers are emotionally distant from their children. However, there are no references that mention the extents of emotional distance. Based on the results of this study, the high frequency of father involvement may prove that fathers in Aceh are not too emotionally distant from their children. This is due to the Islamic concepts that teach Muslims to be emotionally closer to their children (Akin, 2012).

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicated that the profile of father involvement in Aceh was in the instrumental dimension. In other words, fathers showed that a high involvement, in the range of 'always involved,' in areas such as moral and career development, developing a sense of responsibility, independence, and discipline, and providing the child's needs. Some fathers in Aceh showed involvement in the mentoring dimension which includes guiding and giving advice, while the respondents' assessment showed that fathers in Aceh have low involvement in expressive dimensions related to emotionally involved activities.

The received involvement scale and the desired involvement scale have a very small difference in the expressive dimension. Meanwhile, in the instrumental and mentoring dimensions, there was no difference between the received involvement and the desired involvement. Demographic variables which include the child's age, living situation, father's age, father's education, and family income did not have a significant effect on father involvement. However, the sex of the child has a significant influence on the variable of father involvement.

Future researchers who are interested in father involvement in parenting may use the father's personal aspects, such as motivation, self-efficacy, and personality, as predictor factors. They may also want to conduct similar research based on the father's perception, and use a qualitative approach to get more abundant and meaningful data.

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