

Parenting Fathers for Children during the Pandemic: Lessons Learned from Indonesia

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected various aspects of life through social restrictions resulting in a shift in lifestyle. This study aims to explore the parenting practices of fathers in childcare during the pandemic. This study was conducted by distributing questionnaires and 111 fathers were asked about how they are financially responsible to their children, the interaction between father and son, and the affection given to the child during the pandemic. The results showed that fathers were positively involved with their children. More than 97% of fathers indicated their responsibility as the head of the family by providing finances to meet their children's basic needs (food, clothing, and housing) despite a decline in family income of 25-75% of pre-pandemic income. The involvement of fathers in parenting is not only shown by being actively involved in taking care of the children's basic needs, but also in planning for the children's future, developing children's talents, and helping activities related to school matters. Discipline children by enforcing family rules and boundaries about what children can and cannot do. The results also show that more than 60% of fathers often show their affection by hugging, touching, and kissing their children as well as giving praise for the right things their children do. The results of this study explain that fathers must still be involved in child care together with mothers even though the Covid-19 outbreak has been declared over.

Keywords

Parenting father (father involvement); early childhood; covid-19 pandemic



I. Introduction

In traditional families, the father figure is shown as a successful and powerful person, while the mother is a gentle and loving figure. The father is defined by Palkovitz as a person who is married to the mother, who biologically has children from the marriage, and lives at home with the mother and her children. (Palkovitz, 2014). Parenting fathers in parenting is generally known as paternal involvement or father involvement or there are also those who give the term fathering. Pleck (1997) stated that father involvement positive for the development of children and the care provided includes affective and cognitive aspects. Palm (Palkovitz, 2002) stated that paternal care is the complexity of the involvement of men in their daily responsibilities in parenting, which is considered an important value of parenting while Tamis-LeMonda et al. stated that parenting is more responsible for various interactions with children, not only physically but also in Tamis-LeMonda more responsible in various interactions with children (M. Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). In another sense, Lamb states the positive participation of fathers in activities in the form of direct interaction with their children, providing warmth, monitoring and controlling children's activities and being responsible for the needs and needs of children. (ME Lamb, 2010). So it can be said that parenting father It can be

explained as a role that is carried out in relation to the task of directing children to become independent in adulthood, both physically and biologically. Development is a systematic and continuous effort made to realize something that is aspired. Development is a change towards improvement. Changes towards improvement require the mobilization of all human resources and reason to realize what is aspired. In addition, development is also very dependent on the availability of natural resource wealth. The availability of natural resources is one of the keys to economic growth in an area. (Shah, M. et al. 2020)

Different from mother, father has a more neutral role, besides still giving love and being more involved in physical games (Brooks, 2001). However, fathers can still be relied on in parenting as well as mothers in raising children. Lamb (Cabrera, Natasha J.; Tamis-LeMonda, Catherine S.; Lamb, Michael E.; Boller, 1999; Palkovitz, 2002) suggested that the components of parenting in parenting include: 1) Paternal engagement, namely the experience of fathers interacting directly and doing activities together (playing, spending time together and so on); 2) Paternal accessibility, namely the presence and willingness of fathers for children; 3) Paternal responsibility, namely the extent to which the father understands and fulfills the child's needs, including providing a living and planning for the child's future. In a different study, Fox & Bruce (2016) put forward the concept of parenting fathers with dimensions measured using the following aspects: 1) Responsibility, measuring the extent to which fathers use warmth, affection and a supportive attitude to their children; 2) Harshness, measuring the extent to which fathers use a fierce, punishing, and inconsistent approach in parenting their children; 3) Behavioral engagement, measuring the extent to which fathers are involved in activities with their children; 4) Affective involvement which measures the extent to which the father wants and loves the child. However, fathers can still be relied on in parenting as well as mothers in raising children.

The factors that influence the role of fathers in parenting (Puhlman & Pasley, 2016) is as follows. First is family structure. Fathers who do not live with their children experience a different role than fathers who live with their children. Fathers who live with their children have more roles in parenting and discipline, while fathers who do not live with their children take more roles as playmates for their children. In stepfathers the role of fathers becomes more ambiguous and less clear than in biological fathers, where stepfathers have to negotiate the care of their stepchildren with their biological fathers. The second factor is the identity of the father. The identity of the father is defined as the various experiences and meanings that men have in building the sensitivity of being a father and determining the most prominent father element of this experience and meaning. Fathers who have a strong identity tend to be more involved in parenting. Studies have also identified that the father's role will be stronger when there is a positive father role model. The third factor is Co-parenting. Co-parenting.

Since the emergence of ideal parenting ideas in the early 1970s in America, there has been an increase in the role of fathers in the upbringing of children (Puhlman & Pasley, 2016). The results of the regression model show that positive paternal care reduces cognitive delays in boys compared to girls (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008). In another study by Baker (2017) the results of fathers who have preschool children in America also showed that fathers who were involved in parenting in the first 48 months, their sons had better reading and math skills than fathers who were less involved in parenting their children. Parenting also has a positive impact on children's cognitive development (Allen et al., 2007; Baker, 2017; de Santis & Barham, 2017; Sethna et al., 2017). Other studies too proved that it was found that boys were more susceptible to the effects of parenting stress than girls (Harewood et al., 2017). Children who are born with parental care are less likely to

experience emotional problems and are less likely to get involved in fights at home, at school or in the neighborhood(Yeung et al., 2000).

The absence of a father also has an effect on the mental health of children. Research conducted by Fitzsimons & Villadsen(2019)proves that the absence of parenting has an effect on the mental health of children, especially on internalizing symptoms such as anxiety disorders and depression, another finding that boys are more susceptible to the effects of stress on parenting fathers than girls.(Harewood et al., 2017).StudiesThe father's own mental health in his childhood can also predict how the behavior and perception of the father in parenting during the six months after giving birth(Skjothaug et al., 2018), as well as the lack of social support for mothers(Huang et al., 2014)and this is detrimental to their spouses and children later during the parenting period.Fathers are considered important for the development of children's independence, the formation of gender identity and the development of the child's moral system as well as the child's mental health(Papaleontiou - Louca & Al Omari, 2020). Other studies also mention howthe challenges and determination of young fathers during the pandemic to stay involved in parenting and ready to provide services and support to positively promote mental health outcomes in young families(Recto et al., 2021).

In this study, we explore the parenting that fathers do during the pandemic, how the attitude of the father's responsibility to the child; a form of childcare given to children during a pandemic, father-daughter interaction. In addition, we also explore related to the enforcement of discipline and responsibility for children carried out by fathers. Based onResearch conducted by Stolz, Barber & Olsen(2005)Regarding the differences in the influence of the father's role or the mother's role in parenting children with behavioral disorders, the results show that the mother's role is more important in explaining antisocial behavior in children, compared to the father's role.When fathers are not around, their model space is left vacant and children are allowed to find male identities without the support of sons adopting behavior that reaches what is known as delinquency.(Papaleontiou - Louca & Al Omari, 2020). Children who are born with parental care are less likely to get involved in fights at home, at school or in the neighborhood(Yeung et al., 2000). Therefore, it is important to dig deeper into the role of fathers in caring for their children during the pandemic. what are the forms of involvement.

II. Research Method

The study used is an exploratory study conducted in the province of DKI Jakarta, Indonesia, which is the capital city of Indonesia. This city was chosen because it is an area with a multicultural population and can represent the diversity of ethnicities, cultures and religions in various regions in Indonesia. The research population is fathers who have children who attend Kindergarten and purposive random sampling is used to select respondents as many as 111 fathers.

The instrument given was in the form of a questionnaire through an online survey to find out how the parenting was carried out by the father during the covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire includes questions about the characteristics of the father, responsibility, harness, behavioral engagement and affective involvement of parenting. This study explores the form of father involvement in the care of children who attend kindergarten aged 5-6 years. Question items from the study were adapted based on previous research instruments(Hawkins et al., 1999)as well as theoretical studies that specifically focus on paternal care(Bruce & Fox, 2016; Cabrera, Natasha J.; Tamis-LeMonda, Catherine S.; Lamb, Michael E.; Boller, 1999; Palkovitz, 2002). The questionnaire was tested by testing

its validity and reliability by giving it to 68 fathers who met the requirements from an area that has the same regional characteristics as the respondent's population.

Data Quantitative analysis was objectively and presented with the help of frequency and percentage tables. Qualitative data were analyzed in the form of themes and categories, starting with grouping the same data and then interpreting it to give meaning to each sub-aspect and the relationship between one another. Then the analysis and interpretation of all aspects is carried out to understand the meaning of the relationship between one aspect and another in paternal care.

III. Result and Discussion

Respondents in this study amounted to 111 fathers who live in the province of DKI Jakarta, with the distribution of residence in the city of East Jakarta 49 people (44.14%), West Jakarta 15 people (13.51%), Central Jakarta 12 people (10, 81%), North Jakarta 16 people (14.41%) and South Jakarta 19 people (17.11%). 9% of the total respondents aged <30 years, aged 31-40 years were 58.6%; 29.7% fathers aged 41-50 years and fathers aged > 50 years were 2.7%. The educational background of the respondents can be seen in the table below:

Table1. Characteristics of Father's Education

last education	Frequency	Percent
SD	3	2.70%
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	11	9.91%
SMA/SMEA/SMK	43	38.74%
Diploma	9	8.11.1%
Bachelor degree	39	35.14%
Masters/S2	5	4.5 %
Doctoral/S3	1	0.90%
Total	111	100%

Respondents in this study at most had high school graduates with 38.74% of the total respondents, then fathers graduated from bachelor degrees by 35.14%, and at least 1 person had a doctoral education (0.90%). The educational background of the father is the lowest with 1 elementary school graduate and the highest education is doctoral with 1 person. A total of 59 people (53.15%) of the fathers have a permanent job and as many as 52 people (46.85%) have a temporary job

Table 2. Father parenting data description

	mean	median	Min	Max
As a father I accept the responsibility to provide financial support to my children (X3.1)	2.315	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father is responsible for meeting the child's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter and health care) (X3.2)	2.261	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father is involved in daily routine/taking care of children's basic needs (feeding, delivering etc) (X3.3)	2.198	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father listens to the views/opinions of children (X3.4)	2.297	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father plans children's future in education (X3.5)	2,243	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers encourage children to develop their talents (X3.6)	2.270	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father enforces family rules (X3.7)	2,306	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father sets limits for child's behavior (X3.8)	2.252	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father disciplines child (X3.9)	2.270	2.0	1.0	3.0

Father teaches son to follow school rules (X3.10)	2.261	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers encourage children to do their tasks (X3.11)	2.252	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers teach children to be responsible for what they do (X3.12)	2,306	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father encourages children to do homework (X3.13)	2,306	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father helping children in doing school work (X3.14)	2.207	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father attends activities organized by school (X3.15)	2.216	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father helping son learn to read (X3.16)	2.180	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers encourage children to succeed in school (X3.17)	2.234	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father reading stories to children (X3.18)	2,243	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father knows where son is going (X3.19)	2.297	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father spends time with son talking (X3.20)	2.216	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father spends time with children to do activities the child likes (X3.21)	2,243	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father working together with son doing homework (X3.22)	2.207	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father takes child to interesting places (office, park) (X3.23)	2.261	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father shows affection by touching, hugging and kissing child (X3.24)	2.261	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father praises son for doing the right thing or good thing (X3.25)	2.288	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father tells son that father loves him (X3.26)	2.315	3.0	1.0	3.0
Father becomes a friend to the child (X3.27)	2.270	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father pays attention to what the child reads (X3.28)	2.225	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers provide emotional support to their mothers (X3.29)	2.270	2.0	1.0	3.0
Fathers tell children that their mother is a special person (X3.30)	2.270	2.0	1.0	3.0
Father cooperates with mother in raising children (X3.31)	2.315	2.0	1.0	3.0

The first aspect that fathers ask about parenting their children is responsibility. This aspect measures the extent to which fathers use warmth, affection and support for their children. There are 6 questions (X3.1-X3.6) that assess the attitude of the father's responsibility and responsibility in preparing a parenting plan. From the results of the table above, the average score in this aspect is obtained from the question item "As a father, I accept his responsibility to provide financial support to his children" (X3.1) of 2,315. This means that the awareness of fathers to be responsible in terms of financial support in an effort to fulfill basic needs is very high compared to other indicators. This is partly because the concept of the father in Indonesian culture is still strong, so that the form of responsibility is only interpreted as giving money to buy and meet the basic needs of children. The financial support provided by the father in the form of providing food, clothing, adequate housing, education costs and health costs is very helpful in forming a stronger emotional bond between father and son.(Miller et al., 2020). AYes, those with full-time jobs and also permanent employment status have higher involvement in child care, in the form of greater responsibility to children and better financial support(Coley & Morris, 2002), which means that the ability and good financial provision will have a positive influence on the father's upbringing.This certainly has a positive impact on child development.

In the indicator "fathers are involved in daily routines/take care of children's basic needs" (X3.2) the lowest result is 2,198. For fathers' involvement in feeding activities, taking children to school is less done because of the role of fathers as breadwinners so that the father has more time to work. For fathers who continue to work in the office during the pandemic, the opportunity to feed their children is only obtained when the father is not working, while the opportunity to take them to school is reduced because children are learning from home during the pandemic. Although during the pandemic most of the fathers worked from home and or became unemployed, it did not make the involvement of fathers in caring for children greater than conditions before the pandemic.(Bergnehr, 2020).

The second aspect is Harshness, which measures the extent to which fathers use a fierce, punishing, and inconsistent approach to parenting their children. There are 3 question items that measure the characteristics of discipline and how fathers teach children to be responsible (X3.7-X3.9). The highest average score in harshness was obtained from the question item "father enforces family rules (X3.7) of 2,306, meaning that fathers have a greater responsibility in enforcing the rules that apply in the family than the father's plan in parenting. The lowest average score of this aspect was obtained from the question item "Father sets limits for children's behavior (X3.8) with a total of 2,252. This is because mothers are more involved in inculcating what behaviors children can and cannot do on a daily basis, fathers tend to follow what mothers suggest to children. This result is clearly different from the results of previous research which stated that mothers discipline their children more than fathers(Hallers-Haalboom et al., 2016), where fathers show more leniency in responding to fathers' disobedience(Adkison-Johnson et al., 2016). In addition to Previous research stated that mothers used more verbal discipline than fathers(Wang & Kenny, 2014)

The third aspect is Behavioral engagement, which measures the extent to which fathers are involved in activities with their children. This aspect consists of 24 questions about the involvement of fathers in school activities and time spent with their children (X3.10-X3.23). The highest average score was obtained from and the item "Fathers encourage children to do homework (X3.13)" with a score of 2,306 each. SDuring the pandemic period, fathers work from home, so fathers can observe children's activities from waking up to late at night and more time to remind children to do their children's online learning tasks. This result is in line with previous research which stated that that fathers with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in their children's school activities than those with lower levels of education(Terriquez, 2013)

The lowest average score in this aspect is on the question item "Fathers help children in doing schoolwork (X3.14) with a score of 2,207. This means that even though fathers are at home during the pandemic, there are fewer fathers who will help their children with chores. This is more on the role of the father who only "encourages" the child to do schoolwork, not "doing" the child's task. This is also a form of father's firmness in applying the child's sense of responsibility to do the tasks given by the teacher during online learning.

The fourth aspect is affective involvement, which measures the extent to which fathers want and love their children. This aspect consists of 8 questions (X2.24-X3.31) about how the father shows affection and shows warmth in parenting. The highest score from this aspect comes from the question item "The father tells the child that the father loves him (X3.26)" and the item "Father cooperates with the mother in raising the child (X3.31) with a total score of 2,315 each. This means that during this pandemic, fathers express their affection more verbally through 'Father loves you'. And fathers are more able to work together with mothers in raising children because fathers spend more time at home during the pandemic. Expressions of affection by fathers are somewhat influenced by the pandemic conditions, where health issues are the main thing for fathers for their families. Many families have left because of the Covid-19 virus, so that at every opportunity, father expresses his warmth and affection more verbally.

The lowest score was obtained from the question item "Fathers show affection by touching, hugging and kissing their children (X3.24) with a total of 2,261. This is due to the "reduced direct contact" effect, especially if the new father comes from traveling outside the home. Fathers during the pandemic are not free to be able to directly give the practice to their children at home because of the health protocol rules that are applied.

Fathers must clean themselves first before making contact with children. If the father is a medical officer, the father will find it difficult to make skin-to-skin contact with the child due to quarantine obligations, unable to meet in person, fear of infection and other health protocol factors. Another factor that can be considered in this item is that the father experiences stress due to "unusual" family economic conditions. There is a risk of reduced income, unilateral termination of employment, so that fathers become more vulnerable and are less likely to express their affection for children. Not to mention the increasing role of fathers from "only as breadwinners" to "immediate educators" who have to guide children to study at home during the online learning period.

IV. Conclusion

During the pandemic, father's involvement in parenting is greater than in the period before the Covid-19 virus hit. This is because during the pandemic, fathers spend more time at home, working from home and some have lost their jobs and are not working. This form of involvement is shown in the aspects of responsibility, harshness, behavioral engagement and affective involvement from parenting fathers to their children

This research certainly has shortcomings, where it is possible that fathers carry out more strict discipline due to stress due to the effects of the pandemic and also parental stress caused by conflicts with partners related to lifestyle changes and economic pressure due to pandemics and more negative affective involvement. Meanwhile, research shows positive results for discipline enforcement and affective involvement. Future research is needed to investigate the extent of parental stress and father's affective involvement during the pandemic.

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