A SINGLE FAHTER'S CAREGIVING

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to examine the intricate dynamics of single-parent households in Indonesia, specifically focusing on the role of fathers as single parents, which is shaped by their work responsibilities and duties before and after divorce.

Method: This research utilizes a qualitative phenomenological methodology, employing snowball sampling to collect data through in-depth interviews. An interview was done to collect data on the father's pre-divorce experience, encompassing his initial parental role, changes in his obligations after the divorce, his level of involvement in raising the kid, and the difficulties he faced.

Results and Discussion: The research shows that fathers act as breadwinners, caregivers, mentors and protectors of children. Challenges include managing time between work and children, educating them in worship, and overcoming social expectations and shyness. This research underlines the hopes of single fathers for their children to grow up independent, intelligent and responsible. This research reveals the diversity of fathers' roles as single parents, influenced by work, reasons for divorce, and roles before and after divorce. Fathers face embarrassment, difficulties caring for children, working outside the city, and leaving children alone. Although complex, the role of single fathers shows a positive impact on children's academic performance. Fathers hope to see his children succeed and love their father.

Originality/Value: This research offers a comprehensive examination of the father's role as the exclusive caregiver in the upbringing of children.

Keywords: Children, Father, Parenting, Single.

RESUMO

RESUMO: Esta investigação visa examinar a intrincada dinâmica dos agregados familiares monoparentais na Indonésia, centrando-se especificamente no papel dos pais como pais solteiros, que é moldado pelas suas responsabilidades e deveres profissionais antes e depois do divórcio.

Método: Esta pesquisa utiliza uma metodologia fenomenológica qualitativa, empregando amostragem em bola de neve para coletar dados por meio de entrevistas em profundidade. Foi realizada uma entrevista para recolher dados sobre a experiência pré-divórcio do pai, abrangendo o seu papel parental inicial, as mudanças nas suas obrigações após o divórcio, o seu nível de envolvimento na criação do filho e as dificuldades que enfrentou.

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Resultados e Discussão: A pesquisa mostra que os pais atuam como chefes de família, cuidadores, mentores e protetores dos filhos. Os desafios incluem gerir o tempo entre o trabalho e os filhos, educá-los na adoração e superar as expectativas sociais e a timidez. Esta investigação sublinha a esperança dos pais solteiros de que os seus filhos cresçam independentes, inteligentes e responsáveis. Esta investigação revela a diversidade dos papéis dos pais como pais solteiros, influenciados pelo trabalho, pelos motivos do divórcio e pelos papéis antes e depois do divórcio. Os pais enfrentam constrangimentos, dificuldades para cuidar dos filhos, trabalhar fora da cidade e deixar os filhos sozinhos. Embora complexo, o papel dos pais solteiros apresenta um impacto positivo no desempenho acadêmico dos filhos. Os pais esperam ver seus filhos terem sucesso e amarem o pai.

Originalidade/Valor: Esta pesquisa oferece um exame abrangente do papel do pai como cuidador exclusivo na educação dos filhos.


EL CUIDADO DE UN PADRE SOLTERO

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Esta investigación tiene como objetivo examinar la intrincada dinámica de los hogares monoparentales en Indonesia, centrándose específicamente en el papel de los padres como padres solteros, que está determinado por sus responsabilidades y deberes laborales antes y después del divorcio.

Método: Esta investigación utiliza una metodología fenomenológica cualitativa, empleando muestreo en bola de nieve para recopilar datos a través de entrevistas en profundidad. Se realizó una entrevista para recopilar datos sobre la experiencia del padre antes del divorcio, abarcando su rol parental inicial, los cambios en sus obligaciones después del divorcio, su nivel de participación en la crianza del niño y las dificultades que enfrentó.

Resultados y Discusión: La investigación muestra que los padres actúan como sostén de la familia, cuidadores, mentores y protectores de los niños. Los desafíos incluyen administrar el tiempo entre el trabajo y los niños, educarlos en la adoración y superar las expectativas sociales y la timidez. Esta investigación subraya las esperanzas de los padres solteros de que sus hijos crezcan independientes, inteligentes y responsables. Esta investigación revela la diversidad de roles de los padres solteros, influenciados por el trabajo, los motivos del divorcio y los roles antes y después del divorcio. Los padres enfrentan vergüenza, dificultades para cuidar a sus hijos, trabajar fuera de la ciudad y dejar a sus hijos solos. Aunque complejo, el papel de los padres solteros muestra un impacto positivo en el rendimiento académico de los niños. Los padres esperan ver a sus hijos triunfar y amar a su padre.

Originalidad/Valor: Esta investigación ofrece un exame exhaustivo del papel del padre como cuidador exclusivo en la crianza de los hijos.

Palabras clave: Hijos, Padre, Crianza, Soltero.

INTRODUCTION

The ideal family structure comprises multiple individuals, including a biological father or mother, her progeny, and their children. Each member of the family is entrusted with distinct responsibilities (Bianco, 2021). Nevertheless, many factors consistently avert this phenomenon. An instance of this is divorce. The Supreme Court Religious Body (Badilag) reports an annual escalation in the incidence of family divorces in Indonesia. Divorces accounted for 357,000
cases in 2016, representing a divorce rate of 19.9% of a total of 1.8 million occurrences. Divorces constituted 357,000 instances in 2017, representing an 18.8% divorce rate out of 1.9 million occurrences. According to a study conducted by Wardani, Handayani, and Tsia (2018), divorce has been found to result in a decline in various aspects of children's psychological well-being, such as their communication skills, daily activities, personality, life satisfaction, and self-confidence (Kume, 2015).

The 2015 Inter-Census Population Survey (SUPAS) conducted by the BPS revealed that a considerable percentage of households in Indonesia are headed by a single parent, accounting for 24% of family chiefs. On the contrary, sole parenthood is observed among a mere 4% of male family leaders in Indonesia. This indicates that fathers outnumber mothers. Indonesian society continues to be dominated by patriarchal structures, particularly within the Javanese culture. The father is employed in the public sector to provide for the family. Meanwhile, the mother is engaged in the household sector, where she enlists the assistance of her peers in executing domestic duties, including child care, housekeeping, cooking, and laundry (Muslimin, 2019).

A study conducted in 2018 by Ayuwanty, Mulyana, and Zainuddin revealed that the academic performance of children raised by unmarried parents was comparatively substandard. This is the result of parents needing to carry out their responsibilities adequately. Parenting while single and juggling multiple obligations presents unique difficulties, particularly concerning imparting moral values to children (Isma, 2016). The involvement of fathers during the transition from early childhood to school age substantially influences the development of independence in pre-adolescent children. Research findings published in The Lancet Public Health indicate that the risk of mortality for divorced women or married men is three times greater than that of widowers. A sample of 40,000 parents who participated in a Canadian public health survey comprised the subjects of this study. This study's subject matter consists of divorced or married individuals. The results indicate that these individuals lack superior coping mechanisms for stress management in comparison to divorced or bereaved women. Simultaneously, the partner must be able to provide sufficient care for the child, work, attend to personal affairs, and attend to domestic obligations. Conversely, males need to refrain from engaging in multitasking. In consequence, the widower experiences an increase in tension.

Simpson and Floud (2018) have documented viral news regarding a Jakarta-based single father who operates as an online motorcycle transportation driver. As a result of a third party's interference during his shift, the spouse of a motorbike taxi driver abandoned their child and husband (Lahitani, 2019). Custodial fathers encounter many obstacles, including a sense of
being overburdened by their parental responsibilities. In general, fathers often exhibit a limited understanding of their children's emotional and psychological requirements, particularly during their formative years. Stress levels frequently increase due to the presumption that parents bear sole responsibility for the upbringing of their children (Brooks, 2011).

The father's capacity to adjust to a new position as the primary caregiver is crucial. In his study, Lamb (2010) classified fathers' participation in raising children into three distinct categories: (1) fathers' involvement pertains to the active engagement of fathers in direct interactions with their children, encompassing activities such as playing, teaching, or engaging in other leisurely pursuits. (2) The ability to engage with the younger generation. The subject matter pertains to the tasks and functions associated with creating a parenting plan. Additionally, Dick (2004) classified the involvement of fathers in childrearing into the following eight categories: (1) Positive engagement: Paternal figures assume a significant responsibility in imparting ethical counsel to their offspring. (2) Fatherly Function: Fathers assume the role of moral role models, furnishing their children with constructive instances to emulate. (3) Fathers serve as gender role models by instructing their children to adhere to traditional gender norms. (4) Provider role: Fathers contribute to the well-being of their children by attending to their requirements. (5) Androgynous role: The father influences the development of his child's sense of self. (6) One of the familial responsibilities is providing all-encompassing care for the infant. (7) Fathers can instill a sense of tranquility in their offspring when necessary. Single-parent households frequently subject their children to inadequate supervision, which may impede their development of social interaction and emotional maturity (Diaz-Serrano & Flamand, 2023).

Single parents must possess the capacity to assume multiple obligations to uphold the integrity of their family (Pereira & Beatriz, 2023). Contrary to this, the proportion of parents without a partner is far smaller than that of parents with a partner, with a ratio of 3 to 20. Consequently, society questions the competence of fathers to do diverse jobs. In a patriarchal society, traditional gender roles frequently provide fathers with obligations in the public domain. At the same time, women are expected to take on household duties, particularly in child-rearing and caregiving. Assuming the role of a father and assuming several tasks can provide challenges for males, mainly due to their relatively restricted amount of time spent with their children compared to mothers. Consequently, children have less familiarity with their fathers.

Modern society is becoming more aware of and appreciative of the significance of solitary fathers’ role in childrearing. Historically, childcare and household responsibilities were
attributed to mothers, while labor outside the home was typically associated with fathers (Hernández, 2022). The existence of solitary fathers, nevertheless, alters the prevailing notion that childrearing is exclusively the responsibility of mothers as gender equality advances. The father figure substantially impacts the development of a child's sense of self. The active involvement of single fathers in their children's lives contributes to the cultivation of positive moral principles, self-assurance, and self-awareness. Sukatin et al. (2020) demonstrate that father participation in childrearing positively impacts children's cognitive, affective, and social development. Offspring who foster robust father relationships frequently exhibit enhanced social lives, superior interpersonal aptitudes, and elevated scholastic performance.

Based on this context, researchers want to investigate the father's function as the sole caregiver in raising children. This research examines the involvement of fathers as sole caregivers in child care.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative phenomenological method. Information was collected through comprehensive interviews. This study examined five divorced fathers who were awarded custody of their children. The five of them have custody of one child. The research sample used snowball sampling to collect information (Kabongo & Malose, 2023). The researcher selected the first informant based on referrals from acquaintances, neighbors, or family members who met the research requirements. The interview was conducted to collect information about the father's history before the divorce, including his initial position as a parent, his responsibilities after the divorce, his level of involvement in raising children, and his difficulties.

Participant consent for research was obtained from informants before the interview. His residence and place of business were visited twice for interviews. The initial interview lasts between forty and sixty minutes, and twenty to thirty minutes is the average length of subsequent sessions. Patterns that emerge within the data are identified through thematic analysis in data analysis. Verbatim transcripts were subsequently compiled from the audio recordings of the interviews. Using an informant validation methodology, the data's validity was evaluated. Tabulated in Table 1 are the outcomes of the interview:
Table 1

Informant Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Child's Gender</th>
<th>Child Age</th>
<th>Duration of single fatherhood (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JK</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Enterpreneur</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Enterpreneur</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>6,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the informants' ages in this study varied between 39 and 52 years. The children under supervision ranged in age from 6 to 12 years, whereas the informant, a single father, had been in this job for seven years.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to provide a better understanding of the role of fathers as single parents in raising children. The results show the following themes:

Table 2

Theme Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The pre-divorce role of the father</td>
<td>Changing roles: guiding children; parenthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The post-divorce role of the father</td>
<td>Serve as a guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of father-raised offspring</td>
<td>Role directives for the father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges encountered as a single parent</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s hope</td>
<td>Hope for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before transitioning to single parenthood, the father was the primary provider for the family. Although fathers recognize that childrearing is the wife's duty, BS and JK's fathers continue to fulfill this responsibility. Because fathers typically labor outside the home and lack the time to do so, this research indicates that mothers have more time to supervise and educate their children. Couples should dedicate quality time to their children after their return from work. The non-divorced spouse is responsible for overseeing the family finances.

The analysis themes will be explained as follows:
3.1 THE PRE-DIVORCE ROLE OF THE FATHER

Father frequently attended playgroups and stayed with friends before becoming a single parent; however, he now emphasizes his responsibilities as a parent and wife. Single parenthood alters the family structure, as there is no longer a complete set of parents but merely a father and child. Before the divorce, the wife was obligated to provide for the children, including daily expenses and laundry. The father is, nevertheless, obligated to provide for the household following the divorce. Based on the perspectives of the four fathers, the dual role of parenthood (father and child) presents a formidable challenge for solitary parents. While providing for his family's emotional needs, father continues to labor (Dhungel et al., 2023).

3.2 THE POST-DIVORCE ROLE OF THE FATHER

The family structure alters once an individual becomes a single parent. There are now only a father and child in families, as opposed to complete parents in the past. The wife was obligated to provide food, wash clothing, and care for children before the divorce. However, following the father's status as a single parent, he was also tasked with household responsibilities (Harrison et al., 2021). The five paternal figures continue to provide for their families and satisfy their emotional requirements despite assuming the dual roles of caregivers and providers.

As single parents, the five fathers were responsible for various tasks related to caring for their children, including making meals, bathing them, assisting with their studies, doing laundry, and taking them to school before work. The following are excerpts from the interview:

Before going to school, I have to prepare food, even if it's just fried eggs with soy sauce; if I don't have time, I buy side dishes outside. After that, I take my child to school. (BS/2023)

At first, I was surprised by my morning activities because I had to prepare everything myself, starting from waking them up, bathing them, and making food for my children; sometimes, I bought them food and took them to school supplies because I also had to do it. Go to work quickly. (AF/ 2023)

I do everything myself; sometimes, my children also help wash the dishes themselves. I prepare food and accompany the children to study, but I am the one who has the most difficulty washing, so I put it in the laundry because I also have to work, so I don't have time to wash and iron. (SP/2023)
Father is also a guide, particularly about worship instruction. In light of children receiving an education at school, paternal involvement in worship instruction is diminished (Iztayeva, 2021). On the contrary, fathers prioritize their children's instruction in the proper execution of their religious obligations. The five fathers oversaw the prayer-observance of their offspring. In addition, two fathers, BS and SP, stated that they instructed their children to peruse the Iqro and Al-Qur'an following the Asyar prayer and to recite the Qur’an. Fathers begin teaching their children to worship Allah SWT as early as the first grade of elementary school due to the universal obligation that worship imposes.

In Islam, parents serve as role models for their children, enabling them to worship by exemplifying and instilling virtuous practices effectively. Below are some quotations from interviews conducted with parents:

*My child from kindergarten has participated in reciting the Qur’an and praying, but not every day because sometimes he likes to play. When he was in elementary school, my child recited the Qur’an every day, and during the fasting month, he wanted to participate in fasting even though he did not fast completely.* (BS/2023)

*Because I take part in reciting the Qur’an at TPA, I often go to the mosque, and my children come along. Previously, his mother never participated in reciting the Qur’an; fortunately, his friends here frequently invited him to pray at the mosque, so my son also enjoyed going to the mosque* (SP/2023)

In addition to serving as guides, fathers often function as companions during children's study sessions. When children reach the age to attend school, they require the presence and guidance of adults to accompany them and impart information and skills. BR's father was responsible for instructing and accompanying the children after his mother departed.

*So when my child comes home from school, I'm at home and try to accompany my child, such as teaching my child the materials at school so that my child doesn’t fall behind in his studies.* (AF/2023)

This shows that the father's role in raising children is carried out directly by accompanying his child when studying or doing homework together. However, not all fathers accompany their children when studying. For example, BR's father asks his parents to help him accompany his child to study and asks them to help discipline his child. Fifth, fathers make rules that children must obey, just as fathers do.
I have a rule for the children to put away their shoes, clothes, and bags after school and recite the Qur’an daily as agreed. I will reprimand them if they do not obey the rules I give. (BR/2023)

Even though my child is still small, I have gotten used to waking up independently, washing her dishes after eating, bathing, wearing her clothes, and praying the obligatory prayers. Thank God, this has finally become a good habit so that after his mother is gone, this child can be independent. (JK/2023)

Even though my child often plays, if she wants to play, she must first get permission from her parents. If I weren’t there, someone would be there to tell me. (AF/2023)

Beginning with the act of awakening in the morning, organizing attire, engaging in the recitation of the Koran following the Maghrib prayer, seeking consent to engage in recreational activities, and concluding with the act of worship before retiring for the night. Fathers train children to cultivate discipline, independence, and orderliness. In addition to assisting the child with their studies, the father encouraged the child, advising them not to be ashamed in front of their peers due to their parent’s divorce.

I often chat with my child so that he doesn’t feel alone because his father and mother are divorced. I said, "Tell me if there is anything, and we will sit down to solve the problem together." I will also always be there for my child and not feel inferior. (BS/2023)

Single father role management refers to how the father prioritizes his children and divides his time among multiple responsibilities, as evidenced by the following:

My child is my main priority, and even though I am swamped, I will make time to chat, tell stories, or buy snacks together before I work. (BR/2023)

In the past, when his mother left, we divorced. My child has no one to look after him. In the end, I took it to work. It’s a shame, but I have no other choice. (AF/2023).

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF FATHER-RAISED OFFSPRING

This study aims to elucidate the function of single fathers in the upbringing of children. A father with a single child must alter his approach to parenting. As a sole custodial parent, the father assumes the childcare duties previously undertaken by the mother. According to Lestari...
(2012), when one parent is a single parent, they cannot fulfill the shared tasks of parenting that would typically be carried out by both the father and mother working together and supporting each other. Caring for and raising one's offspring is considered a duty of the father (Dhunget al., 2023). He aids his child in his studies and provides care for him. In addition, fathers serve as worship and academic mentors for their children. Fathers achieve this by establishing guidelines and observing their children's behavior. Upon learning that his son disobeyed the rules, the father attempted to discipline him again. To terminate psychological support, the father employed the technique of withdrawal of affection, which symbolizes disapproval. To maintain authority over their offspring, parents implement discipline. Parents often engage in this practice to assist their children in the development of specific abilities and self-control (Lestari, 2012). His father provides encouragement and assistance to prevent children with learning difficulties from feeling isolated when confronted with adversity.

The father must balance providing for one's family and caring for children. In specific circumstances, paternal caregiving may take precedence over employment for fathers (Krajewska & Cahill-O’Callaghan, 2020). However, in other situations, fathers frequently request permission to care for their children while at work, compelling them to remain home during periods of absence. Conversely, social support from family and school is extended to some fathers who fulfill their parental responsibilities as single parents. The family assists with the care and supervision of the children while the father is at work. This demonstrates that fathers receive social support within the household and at the child's educational institution due to a collectivist society and strong familial bonds.

The parents and schools frequently communicate directly or indirectly regarding their child's development through parent meetings. Moreover, this element exerts an impact on the development of children (Degarmo & Jones, 2019). Being independent, responsible, and aware of family circumstances are characteristics that develop in children reared by their fathers. This aligns with Usma, Cangara, and Muhammad (2010) viewpoint that offspring reared in uniparental households become more self-reliant and mature at an accelerated rate. The child maintains consistent academic achievement with his father's assistance and strong social support. Academic success is attainable for children by their individual capabilities. Nonetheless, providing care for their offspring remains a challenge for fathers.
3.4 THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AS A SINGLE PARENT

One of the challenges fathers face in caring for their children is caring for their toddlers without assistance (Luo & Zhang, 2023). The children frequently engaged in disputes, and the father was unsure how to resolve the issue. A challenge arises when fathers make childcare decisions, as they often perceive a lack of available support or guidance. Furthermore, father encountered challenges when his employer requested him to relocate for employment purposes. The child refuses to reside with his mother or be placed in the care of his grandma. Father had just given up during the interview and was uncertain whether he would be dismissed. However, should he be terminated, he can locate a replacement. In addition, fathers encounter challenges stemming from feelings of embarrassment when performing tasks that deviate from the expected gender role, including attending school events, preparing tea for visitors, and other responsibilities typically associated with the mother. Fathers who are solitary parents experience stress when they are required to raise their children without the presence of a mother to assist with their care and attention, according to previous research (Melhado, 2017).

3.5 FATHER’S HOPE

Parents undoubtedly desire their children to be successful, intelligent, affectionate toward their fathers, and accountable. According to a study by Lestari (2012), parents have high expectations for their children to develop into devout, successful individuals. While raising a child as a single parent, even fathers harbor aspirations for their child's moral development.

4 CONCLUSION

The researchers' data analysis and interviews reveal the wide range of backgrounds of single fathers in terms of their roles. Variables such as the father's occupation and role both before and after becoming a single parent can exert an effect. Single fathers should contemplate altering their responsibilities as parents, which encompass overseeing their children, seeking spiritual counsel, and providing education. In addition to that, fathers also have a multitude of hurdles, including feelings of humiliation in specific circumstances, obstacles in providing care for their children, and work-related issues that necessitate task changes and leaving their children unattended at home.
Fathers play a significant part in caring for their children. In this scenario, 50% of the children raised by single parents attain outstanding academic achievements and secure the top position in their school. Nevertheless, fathers encounter challenges when their children struggle to regulate and soothe themselves. Furthermore, due to their substantial workload, fathers are compelled to leave their children alone at home without a caregiver. Single fathers have elevated expectations for their children. Their aspirations encompass their desire for their child to develop into an accomplished, intelligent, and prosperous individual while also harboring affection and admiration for their father. Fathers also aspire for their own lives, desiring to witness their offspring thrive in adulthood and strive towards personal growth in the years to come.

As caregivers, fathers are expected to organize quality time for their children to engage in play and develop emotional bonds. In addition, fathers are expected to guide their children in developing feminine qualities by assisting influential female figures, including mothers or sisters. Additionally, it is expected that research will examine aspects of communication between fathers and children, as well as how single fathers instruct their children regarding gender roles.

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