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MOTHER EDUCATES: QUESTIONING MOTHER'S CARE CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Parenting is two-way interaction process between parents and children that is influenced by the culture and social institutions in which children are raised. Exploring factors that influence the ways mothers in parenting their children is the focus of this study. The research conducted in qualitative method with a descriptive research design. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations, were the methods used by researchers to gather information. The results show that age, education level, parenting experience received by parents, and the birth order of children contributed to the mother's care process. Internal driving factors of parenting is the motivation and knowledge on parenting based on their own experience, and external driving factors are extended family such as grandmother or aunty. Internal and external factors influenced the mothers' parent their children. The researchers recommend developing a local community of mothers as an important strategy for learning and sharing experiences in parenting.

Keywords: parenting, mother's care capacity, school-age children

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INTRODUCTION

An ecological theory states that family existence is the first, closest environment for children and becomes an important place for children to develop and form patterns and habits of behavior (Santrock, 2007). The family acts as a primary group for children where they are socialized and educated. The family environment is where they begin to learn to develop into social beings. These important experiences will become the basis for a child to adjust to other people outside the family environment as a social being, both with peers and other adults (Utami, 2008). The experiences of a child within a family are influenced by parenting by parents or other older adults within the home.

Brooks (1991) says that parenting is a process which includes important elements to positively influence children such as maintaining, protecting, and directing children during their developmental period. In line with that opinion, Martin and Colbert (1997) define parenting as a process whereby adults give birth, guard, care for, and direct children.

Supanto (1990) states that care not only takes care of a child but also becomes a learning process for the cultural values that apply to the environment. Taking care of children does not mean just caring for children, but also includes: education, manners, discipline, cleanliness, developing personal responsibility, social knowledge and so on, which starts from the cultural knowledge of their parents.

Thus, parenting is a long process taking place over many years and includes: 1) interaction between the child, parents, and the community where they live, 2) adjusting the needs of life and the temperament of the child with their parents, 3) fulfillment of responsibility for raising and meeting the needs of children, 4) the process of supporting and disciplining the child, and 5) the process of reducing risk and providing protection for the child within the family and community (Berns 1997). As Hayes & Pittelkow (1993) propose that cultural and religious values are adopted by children as they grow and mature intellectually, namely in childhood and in this case the family plays a large role in determining what values are adopted by the child.

Referring to several definitions of parenting, the concept of care includes several key meanings, including (i) parenting processes carried out by parents, aimed at promoting children's physical, mental, and social growth and development, (ii) parenting is a continuous process of interaction between parents and children, (iii) parenting is a process of socialization from parents

or family to their children, (iv) parenting is a process of interaction and socialization that cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context in which children are raised (Santoso, Apsari & Taftazani, 2018).

Relvas (1996) reveals that families are composed of the smallest units, called individuals. In the scope of what is called the nuclear family (which consists of father, mother, and children), the father and mother have the same position, namely as parents. However, sometimes the culture in a country or region will also influence the ways in which the mother and father can function in a family.

According to Confucianism, the husband is the head of the family, so he has the main authority to decide on family matters, while the wife is the subordinate to the husband in almost all matters "to him in nearly all affairs" (Kim & Siegfried, 2001: 85). But, on the other hand, the wife is an "inner master", whose authority is accepted specifically in matters of domestic affairs and family relations. In this family structure, the husband's authority is based on a power structure, while the wife's authority is based on emotional competence. Therefore, the relationship between Father and Mother and their children is fundamentally different.

Other studies on family issues in 6 Asian countries, namely in India, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, and the Philippines also found that in all six countries, mothers were more involved than fathers in terms of childcare and emotional support for their children. Mothers are key players in mediating father-child relationships, while the role of breadwinners is still the central identity of Asian men. Culture and religion together influence the idea of fatherhood in Asia (Yeung, 2013).

In Asian countries, people still believe that fathers play a role as breadwinners and mothers take on the role of caring for children at home, as housewives. This division of roles between father and mother creates a situation where mothers will spend more time with their children, especially while still breastfeeding and when their children are toddlers. This is evidence in many Chinese and Malaysian families residing on the coastal area of Malaysia (Noor, (1999); Santoso & Apsari, (2018); Santoso, Apsari & Taftazani (2018)). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the mother is often connoted as a person who must be fully at home; taking care of the house, preparing food, caring for children, and serving her husband. Mother's role includes attention to the emotional needs of their children including acting with affection towards their children thus make the children usually attach more to their

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mothers than to their fathers who act as "sources of power and judges" (Idi and Safarina, 2011).

Hurlock (2005) states that a mother has a very important role in the early education process for their children. This happens because the mother is the one who first interacts with their child, someone who is able to give a sense of security and trustworthiness. This is in line with work from Hidayati (2013) stating that the influence of a mother as the first person creating the environment for children impacts a child's socialization from childhood to adulthood. Both the quality and quantity of time that children spend with their mothers creates the closeness between mother and child.

One interesting finding regarding parental involvement by Han & Jun (2013) highlighted the role of mothers in the Expressive Involvement (EI) dimension, which was greater than that of the father in terms of caring, friendship, and the emotional development in their children. Other findings also show that in the Mentoring or Advising Involvement dimension, a mother who is more involved with their child has a significantly more important influence than the father, in the area of intellectual development, guiding or teaching, and giving advice. More specifically in terms of school, and schoolwork, the mother has a very important role in contrast with the father.

Previous research by Santoso & Batubara (2017) showed that mothers played more roles in their children's school affairs when compared to their fathers. However, the study also found there were also symptoms of a lack of optimal care by mothers in certain areas such as a lack of knowledge and methods for educating children. Most of the mothers did not have any special knowledge about parenting. They were mostly self taught, learning from the daily reality in their homes. Often, their parenting is less efficient, and they sometimes feel upset and angry about what they perceive to be their 'good' actions towards their children. The mothers in this study only began to realize their parenting mistakes after many failed to educate their children. (Santoso & Batubara (2017)).

The research cited above focused on the impact of parenting on the child, but did not look at which factors affect parents, especially in mothers. This study was designed to examine the internal and external driving factors that influence the parenting practice from mothers to primary school-age children.

METHODS

The research conducted is qualitative research with a descriptive research design. As mentioned by Rubin & Babbie (1997: 109) that one major reason of many social scientific studies is to describe situations and events. This research is trying to convey the parenting situations and the factors influencing the parenting conducted by mothers in Jatinangor area of Sumedang Municipality of West Java Province. The location was appointed by the funder, which is University of Padjadjaran due to its mission to maintain relationship with the neighbourhood.

The data obtained in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained by conducting the interview, observation, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) techniques, and also field notes during the process of extracting data and information in the field. Secondary data was obtained from village monograph data and records of primary school records at the study site.

Respondents in this study were mothers or other family members who cared for primary school age children in grades 1 and 2, or those aged between 6 and 8 years, which is the age when children enter primary school in the region where the study took place. According to Erikson in Woody (2003) and Apsari (2015), school-age children are categorized in children from middle to lower age, between the ages of 6 and 12.

Thirty-two (32) individuals were selected as informants in this study consist of mothers and grandmothers who take care of the children during their mothers's absence. This happened because their mother was working, so the care of the child was entrusted to their grandmother at home.

The data analysis used is the interactive model of Miles at al., (2014), which involves three interrelated activities which are data condensation, data display, and also drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation is related to the process of selection, focus, simplification, abstraction or transformation of data that appears from various data sources, such as field notes, interview transcripts, questionnaires, documents, and other empirical material. The data collected on factors influencing the parenting practice are being selected in accordance with the focus of the research combined together with secondary data and observation data. After data condensation, the clean data then being displayed in table format to ease the author in systematically understand the data. Display data is related to data presentation activities so that it will be in the form of a set of information so that has been systematically arranged so that eventually it becomes the source of

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conclusions and actions. The final stage is drawing and verifying conclusions, which are related to the process of formulating conclusions that are strengthened by the verification and clarification process.

This research is qualitative research, so most of the data will be in the form of sentence decryption. In many ways, the focus of attention is on sentence fragments as the basic form of data found. The first treatment of the data obtained is through various kinds of instruments used is the coding process. There are two stages of the coding process that will be carried out, namely the first cycle code and second cycle pattern codes. In the initial stage, the labeling process is carried out using certain symbols related to the meaning contained in the descriptive or inferential information compiled. The second stage is a grouping or classification process in the form of categorization, theme or construct. The results of this stage can be presented in the form of narrative descriptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Wong in Supartini (2004) states that one of the factors that influence parents to be able to carry out the role of parenting is the age of both mother and father. Research conducted by Kitano et al. (2016) and Tsania, Sunarti, and Krisnatuti (2015) shows that older mothers who marry later will be able to provide better parenting compared to younger mothers. In this study, 72% of the fathers are 36 years old or older while 59% of the mothers are 35 years old or less. Most of them are considered to be in early adulthood, which is less than 45 years of age (Hurlock, 1980; Levinson, 1978 in Monks 2001) which entails a period of adjustment to new patterns of life and new social expectations, whereby adults are expected to play new roles such as husband or wife, parents, and breadwinners. This stage includes developing new values and wishes that emerge from the new roles (Hurlock, 1980).

The majority of respondents have a degree of junior high school or equivalent. This has shown that the educational characteristics of these mothers are relatively low because they are at the level of primary education. The level of education of parents has a large influence on children's development and shows a positive correlation with the care of children. The higher the level of education of parents, the better they care for children, and vice versa (Sulistyaningsih, 2005). (Hurlock, 1974). Another developmental task for young adults is to engage in work or some type of career (Hurlock, 1980). Some (28%) of the informants in this study work as private employees, while the majority (72%) are housewives (Table 3).

Mothers who are housewives can focus their attention on the care of their children at home and their schooling. Working mothers on the other hand, must split their time between the demands of their job and the home. For some couple, the lack of income of the breadwinner made it necessary for the mother to work to meet family needs. However, cultural values in Indonesian society expect mothers to be responsible for nurturing their children. For working mothers this meant that responsibility to help provide care for their children was transferred to other family members such as grandmothers or other relatives, or to third parties, such as babysitters or child care institutions (Santoso & Apsari, 2018).

Parents who have previous experience in parenting, ie, having more than 1 child will be better prepared to carry out their different roles (Supartini, 2004). Experienced parents are also more likely to observe the signs of normal growth and development of their children. The majority of respondents in this study have only 1 child so they have less experience with parenting. However, the informants in this study did have experience caring for younger siblings or children of their siblings. This is one way for the mother to have experience and learn about ways to care for children, which can increase her readiness to care for her own children.

The majority of the informants and their husbands were of Sundanese ethnicity, and this is because the location of the study is located in West Java Province, the home of Sundanese people. Various cultural values passed on by parents and grandparents to the informants in this study during childhood can impact the process of parenting, including the values that both mothers and fathers will have in their approach towards their children. There is a process of cultural inheritance in a society from the previous generation, which is also carried forward to future generations. Therefore, informal education comes from the family, which is one example of the impact of lifelong education (Adiwikarta, 2009). Inheritance of values is one of the important family functions, which requires a process of communication within the family and with the larger society so that each family member is aware of their roles and functions in the family.

Findings from this research show that there are internal and external driving factors that influence carers/parent in parenting.

Internal Driving Factors

One of the internal driving factors for parent in parenting is knowledge. In this study, learning resources or source of knowledge for mothers were obtained based on the learning process from their

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parents and also the self-taught learning process based on their own principles carried out by the mother. The source of learning from mothers that are obtained based on experience is not only derived from the parenting experience provided by their parents, but there is also a nurturing experience obtained by the mother from her grandmother, her own experience in caring when taking care of her sister and caring for her siblings.

The learning process from parents is mostly done by mothers who became informants in this study. This is in line with the view of Pratipto (in Soekanto, 2004) that parents will apply the pattern of care to their children based on the pattern of care they had before and this is reinforced if parents see the parenting pattern they have previously seen as successful.

Learning resources of mothers who do self-taught on parenting are media such as television, youtube, social media. There were also mothers who obtained knowledge about child care from the training and seminars. Self-taught childcare by using their own principles is carried out by mothers for various reasons, for example, because of the distance from their parents and relatives, so that the mother decides to look for her own knowledge about childcare.

There are also mothers who state that care for their children is done instinctively and flows as is. However, of course in the process, they get influence from other people's experiences or from various media that can be accessed by them.

Data on parenting experiences that have been received by mothers from their parents shows that their parents have taught the values and habits of their mothers since childhood. Discipline factors are the dominant values applied in many families. The need to diligently study, diligently recite, know the time in doing activities and not playing much are the values and habits that are applied to the mother as a form of discipline from parents. In addition, non-curbing treatment is a parenting experience that mothers get as a child. Although there is also a family from the mother who applies this, not as many families choose to apply this discipline value.

Shochib (2007) states that parenting children is strongly influenced by several factors, such as experience, parental personality, and values adopted by parents. In line with this view, the informants in this study also applied the values and habits that they obtained as children, for example by applying the values of discipline and not curbing children as indicated by the hopes and efforts made by the mother in guiding and caring for children, so that children can be managed, diligently study,

diligently recite, and also understand the right time to play.

This is in line with the value reference used by mothers in parenting. The majority of informants used references to religious values and disciplinary values to the children. Both of these values consistently appear in the cultural description section of the mother and father's family in parenting, the parenting experience that the mother has received from her parents, the mother's view of her parenting patterns. Situations and moments that make mothers feel successful and confident in carrying out parenting are the results of teaching values and disciplinary attitudes for their children.

Changes in parenting patterns carried out by the mother so that the child can make these self-help efforts and encourage the formation of a positive self-concept in the child. This is as expressed by Potter & Perry (2009) that children's efforts to control assignments are an important element in shaping self-confidence. Children must obtain positive feedback from teachers and parents about their efforts. It is very important for children to develop skills in at least one skill they master. Positive self-concept makes children feel happy, valuable, and have the ability to contribute well to them. Such feelings cause self-esteem, confidence, and a feeling of happiness in general. Instead, negative feelings cause doubts about themselves (Potter & Perry, 2009).

The informants have the desire to be able to improve their ability to care for their children and be more creative in handling children's problems. They are motivated to learn and improve time management related to care that she must do.

The most widely carried out efforts by mothers to be able to improve their abilities in parenting is by finding out information and knowledge from the mass media or social media. This is in line with the times and the ease of accessing information by utilizing advanced technology on mobile phones. In addition, mothers also share with other mothers or with their co-workers regarding childcare.

Unfortunately, there are still mothers who rarely try to get information about parenting. Finding information from various sources is one of the strategies to be ready to parent as revealed by Brisbane (2010). This social readiness includes the habit of seeking information for themselves and others, and taking part in social activities, not closing themselves off to opportunities to learn new parenting skills.

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External Driving Factors

Research conducted by Tsania, Sunarti, and Krisnatuti (2015) in West Java, found that the readiness of women to face their new roles as wives and mothers had a significant relationship with children's development. Mothers who prepare themselves to be able to raise children will improve their ability to care for children. The quality of parenting provided by the mother as the primary caregiver has an important role in child development (Hastuti, Fiernanti & Guhardja, 2011).

The mother's desire to improve her ability in parenting can be done by attending training on childcare. Unfortunately, the majority of informants have never attended training on parenting, and they only rely on the knowledge and experience they have gained in their daily lives.

Only eight informants stated that they had attended training on parenting. From the eight informants, information was obtained that only four people stated that there had been a change in parenting that carried out by the mother as a result or positive progress after the mother attended training on parenting.

Changes that were obtained after the mother participated in training on parenting were in the form of changes in the mother's perspective on her child and changes in how to care. Both forms of change are very important for mothers in carrying out positive care for children. In line with this, Anwar (2000) revealed that children need positive interactions with their mothers or with their caregivers. The influence of a culture that supports interaction between mother and child needs to be preserved. Exploration and learning behavior through this interaction needs to be observed that children need encouragement from parents to develop their abilities. By changing the way of thinking and how to act positively towards children, of course, mothers will be able to carry out the parenting process positively.

As for mothers who felt there were no changes even though they had participated in the training, there were several reasons, for example: (1) there was a disturbance when the mother was attending the training, which was the concentration split because she was carrying her child at that time, (2) living with her grandmother, so that the material presented in the training cannot be applied to her child, (3) the mother forgets about what material was delivered during the training, because she was exhausted during the training.

No changes that occur to the mother after attending the training can be analyzed based on the level of education taken by the mother, for example, that the majority of mothers are at the level of

primary education (junior high or equivalent). Ni'mah and Muniroh (2015) stated that the level of education affects a person in receiving information. People with better levels of education will be easier to receive information than people with low levels of education. The higher the level of education of a person, the easier it is for those concerned to receive information. So that the more knowledge they have, and conversely someone with less education, it will be difficult to digest the message conveyed (Nursalam, 2008). In the context of parenting, information obtained by parents can be used as a provision for mothers and fathers to do the parenting for their children.

Most families include extended family members to care for their children. The most common reason is to help care for children; generally, this is done by the grandparents of one of the married couples (Silverstein & Auerback in Silalahi & Meinarmo, 2010). Behavior and parenting practices carried out by fathers, mothers, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives are very common, and include providing food needs, maintaining health, providing stimulation, social support, behavior, attitudes, values, interests, and beliefs taught to children. This extended family parenting and also education is needed for the growth and development of healthy children (Engle, Menon & Haddad, 1997).

In terms of the involvement of other families in parenting can be divided into two types, such as other families who live together in one house with informants and who do not live together with them. Another family member who chose to live in one house with informants was only experienced by 6 of our informants, who lived with grandparents, brothers, and sisters, children of older siblings. However, the majority of informants chose to involve other families in the care of their children, and they did not live together in one house with the informant's family. They involved relatives such as grandparents, brother-in-law, brother-in-law, uncle and aunt, and also nieces. In Indonesia, the phenomenon of parenting by grandmothers is a choice for working mothers (Latifah, Krisnatuti & Puspitawati, 2016). Grandmother's participation in caring for grandchildren is one form of parental support for working mothers' families and also an external driving factor of parenting conducted by mothers.

CONCLUSION

There are various factors influencing the mothers parenting process, which are age, level of education, parented experienced and position of the

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children in the family. For the internal and external driving factors, mothers acquired the source of parenting from their family environment. Their personal experienced then enriched with self-taught from various information media such as television, internet as well as following training or seminars on parenting. The mothers acquire motivation to learn. This motivation thus resulting in knowledge on how to be good parent. Internal driving factor also emerged from their beliefs system/religion connecting with teaching good values in accordance with the beliefs system/religion to their children.

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