

The Role of Single Fathers in the Moral Development of Children Aged 5-6 Years

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of single fathers in the moral development of children aged 5-6 years in Nguwok Village, where morality is considered a crucial aspect of human development and life. The research method employed is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The subjects of this study are two single fathers with children aged 5-6 years residing in Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation, with data analysis following the Milles and Huberman model. The findings from this research indicate that single fathers play a significant role in nurturing their children, including bathing, feeding, and assisting with homework. The second role involves providing education, particularly in moral values, the third is acting as a mentor, which includes accompanying and disciplining the children, and the last role is that of a friend, ensuring the child feels comfortable talking or sharing stories with their father. According to the research results, the moral development of children raised by single fathers shows a balanced development between capability and incapability. The aspects of moral development examined include speaking politely, practicing religious worship, expressing gratitude when receiving something, maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness, and apologizing when making mistakes.

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Introduction

Nuclear families are generally established based on the bonds of marriage, which serve as the foundation for the family. Parents are entrusted by God to raise their children with full responsibility and love. The role of parents is essentially to guide their children to become an exceptional generation (Agung Hidayatulloh & Laily Fauziyah, 2020; Aulia Septyani et al., 2021; Aziza & Mil, 2021; Fauziah & Nadlifah, 2021; Umairah & Ichsan, 2018; Zuniarsih et al., 2021). A lack of attention can lead children to behave in ways that deviate from the values taught by their parents. However, not all children receive comprehensive care from both of their parents. Some are raised by only their father or mother, often referred to as a single parent.

Being raised by a single parent significantly influences the instillation of moral values, where the upbringing of children by a single parent may differ in the imparting of moral values compared to those raised by both parents. It is possible that such children might exhibit deviant behaviors, such as frequently defying their parents, arguing, and speaking rudely. This behavior occurs due to the lack of attention from one of the parents. A single father must also understand the importance of early childhood education until they reach adulthood. Fathers contribute significantly to a child's development; experiences shared with the father can influence the child well into adulthood. Single parents must be capable of fulfilling dual roles within the household.

Parenting styles represent the methods parents use to share strategies to encourage their children to achieve desired goals. These goals include knowledge, moral values, and behavioral standards that children should possess as adults. The parenting approach of a single father or single parent is uniquely interesting for research. This interest stems from the understanding that the parenting styles of fathers and mothers differ (Herlambang et al., 2023; Lelo & Liutani, 2023; Oktaviyanah & Nammellen Ganesthy, 2020; Rahimah & Sukiman, 2020; Ratna Komalasari et al., 2022; Tifani et al., 2020).

Humans are created with elements of intelligence, forms of intelligence that are utilized to achieve success in life and work. True success is when an individual can understand moral development and apply it in their life. Essentially, morality refers to good deeds. However, not all good deeds can be considered moral actions unless they are performed by someone who knows that the act is good and carries it out consciously. Morality pertains to good actions, but not every good action is deemed moral. A good deed is considered a moral action if it is done by a person who knows that the action is good and performs it consciously. In the growth and development of a child's morality, from a young age, children are nurtured towards good morals. Morality grows through direct experiences in the environment where they live, then evolves into habits, whether understood or not. Behavior is the result of both direct and indirect, or formal and informal, nurturing (Inawati, 2017; Sabi'ati, 2016).

Observations and interviews conducted on March 20, 2022, with several single fathers in Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency regarding the behavior of children raised solely by their fathers revealed instances of impoliteness, such as entering a house without greeting because of inadequate parenting when the child is left alone while the parent is working. There are children who, at their age, understand the importance of prayers for various occasions like before eating, when leaving the house, and before sleeping. However, sometimes these children do not attend their religious studies, and even when they do leave for it, they do not always reach their destination. This inconsistency is due to the lack of habituation by the father in setting an example for his child, often because the father is busy with entrepreneurial activities. Based on the

research conducted, an interesting finding emerged regarding the role of single fathers in the moral development of children: inappropriate parenting styles can form undesirable character traits in children.

A person who is moral and behaves well will be accepted by social groups because their actions benefit others. Conversely, someone who is immoral and behaves poorly will not be accepted by social groups due to the harm they cause others. Similarly, in early childhood, when a child takes toys from their peers, those peers will view the child as naughty and bothersome, leading to widespread disapproval because their actions make others uncomfortable. If the child is not informed that their actions are harmful and hurtful to others, they may continue such behavior into adulthood. However, if an adult explains to them that their actions are wrong, they will also learn to control themselves to be accepted by their group again. Therefore, moral values are the concepts of good and bad that are evident from the habits children practice in their daily lives (Anggraini, 2015; Ma'rifah A & Muthmainnah, 2015).

Consequently, moral development also includes the presence of emotional maturity in children. A child, in their growth and development, lives under the control of their parents. This represents a need that children have. Therefore, the instillation of moral development must be undertaken by all parents, because spirituality involves awareness and unity with others, as well as a combination of fundamental philosophies about life, attitudes, and practices. This article aims to explain the role of fathers in nurturing the morality of their children. This is because fathers have a duty to educate their children in moral aspects, such as worship and learning, so that the children develop better character traits.

Methods

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The research location is in Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency. The informants in this study are single fathers due to widowhood. The data collection techniques employed in this research include interviews, observations, and documentation study. The researcher conducted data analysis starting with the reduction of research data, followed by the presentation of data in narrative form, and then proceeding with verification and conclusion drawing.

Result

Single Fathers in Child Moral Development

The phenomenon of single parenting, particularly the role of fathers as single parents in child-rearing, presents an intriguing area of study. Various research findings suggest that single fathers are often doubted in their success due to the absence of the more gentle maternal qualities compared to the somewhat harsher paternal ones. However, this was not what the researcher observed in Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency. In this observation, the researcher encountered several informants who were single fathers, having lost their wives.

The role of single fathers in the moral development of early childhood is a duty that must be carried out by the parent with love, providing guidance and taking various steps in dealing with the child. First, as single parents, fathers nurture by feeding, bathing the child, and accompanying them during homework or Quranic study sessions. Observations of single fathers in Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency, confirm that

fathers have undertaken these actions. Second, in educating morals, single fathers focus all their attention on teaching children to adopt the basics of good and proper life patterns by instilling moral values to develop a good personality. Third, as guiding parents, single fathers build habits through setting behavior rules and monitoring their implementation, such as discipline. Despite the challenges, fathers persist because they recognize the hope of seeing their children succeed in the future. Fourth, as friends, in this process, fathers become companions so that children feel more comfortable sharing stories joyfully and without coercion, as if the father is engaging in storytelling while interspersing advice without forcing the child to act, making the child comfortable without feeling intimidated when receiving advice from the father.

Early Childhood Moral Development

In Nguwok Village, Modo District, Lamongan Regency, researchers have found that there are still several young children whose moral development has not yet fully matured. Some children exhibit behaviors such as speaking rudely, being impolite, disturbing their peers, and showing reluctance to attend Quranic study sessions. Single fathers in Nguwok Village, Lamongan Regency, have fulfilled their roles in monitoring the moral development of early childhood, but they cannot always provide 24-hour supervision due to their dual responsibilities of earning a living and managing household duties. The research indicates that the role of parents in a child's education is crucial because parents are the first school for their children, meaning that what parents teach will serve as a reference for the child's future.

First, the role of caring for the child involves feeding, bathing, taking care of the child, and performing household tasks. Second, the role of providing moral education to their child. Moral education is an effort to enable children to practice existing morals if given and implemented optimally. The instillation of these values becomes the responsibility of parents, especially single fathers who play a dual role in the family. Fathers are fully responsible for their family members, both in relation to God and to society. This aligns with Safrudin Aziz's views in his book "Family Education: Concepts and Strategies," which states that fathers are responsible for the education in monotheism and the moral education of children. The role of single fathers in this research is very diverse, ranging from providing basic attitudes, offering love, instilling moral values, and more. Third, the role as a guide. Fathers also serve as mentors to their children, this guiding role is practiced in the performance of religious duties by the child, as well as in supporting their learning. If a father notices his child deviating from the rules he has set, he strives to discipline the child again by withdrawing love, an action that shows disapproval by removing emotional support.

Disciplining is an effort by parents or single fathers to control their children, with fathers typically enforcing discipline so that the child can master certain competencies and regulate themselves. The stereotypical views on gender roles seem to influence fathers in their caregiving roles. Fathers may feel uncomfortable with tasks that are traditionally associated with women. Being a single father is certainly not easy. Changing the perception that child-rearing is solely a mother's responsibility seems necessary to make fathers feel more comfortable in nurturing their children, especially when interacting outside the home in matters related to the child. Children need not only material support but also the need for affection.

Fourth, the role of the father as a friend. Fathers also act as friends to ensure their children feel comfortable when wanting to share stories with them and to provide

encouragement. Children develop in a diverse environment. Goldin Meadow states that the environment influences various aspects of a child's life, including how a child develops and learns from their surroundings. According to Mansur, early childhood refers to a group of children in a unique process of development and growth. Children have developmental and growth patterns that correspond to their levels of development and growth. Early childhood possesses distinctive characteristics, whether physical, psychological, moral, social, or others.

The role of parents and education fundamentally guides children to become an exceptional generation, as a child's potential will not develop on its own without parental support. Children need an environment that is deliberately created to allow their potential to grow optimally. Parents play a crucial role in creating an environment that motivates children to be better prepared for facing various challenges in the future.

Moral Development Abilities of Children

Based on field study data, the moral development of children in Nguwok Village includes: First, speaking politely. Children demonstrated the ability to speak politely during observations, albeit infrequently. Interviews with single fathers conducted by the researcher indicated that the most important aspect is that children have been taught to speak politely, and they will become accustomed to it over time if consistently practiced. Second, habitual participation in worship. Positive involvement by fathers was observed; children had accustomed themselves to engaging in worship activities, such as reciting the Quran, performing congregational prayers at Maghrib, and reading prayers before starting activities. The researcher also interviewed single fathers, noting that when fathers are able to accompany their children, they always teach and guide them in learning to habitualize worship practices. Third, expressing gratitude. During observations, children were accustomed to saying thank you when receiving something, predominantly expressing thanks due to habituation. Further interviews with single fathers revealed that children had been encouraged to express gratitude from an early age. Fourth, maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness. During observations, children were capable of maintaining their personal hygiene and that of their environment. This was evident when they washed their hands and feet before entering the house, facilitated by the provision of water for cleaning hands and feet, and by keeping their play area clean and disposing of trash in the proper place. Interviews with single fathers revealed that children were taught these practices at school and accustomed to them at home. If a child did not dispose of trash properly, the single father would advise the child. Fifth, apologizing for mistakes. Observations by the researcher indicated that children were not accustomed to apologizing for their mistakes from a young age. Interviews with single fathers showed that children were not yet used to taking the initiative to apologize on their own but were instructed to do so. However, with time, children will become accustomed to apologizing when they make mistakes.

Children of fathers who are subjects of this study live in a community that teaches good norms, proper ways of interacting, and polite behavior. This aligns with the behavior of the children from the subjects; sometimes, the children may cry and shout, but more dominantly, they follow the habits present in their surrounding environment. From the interviews and observations, the subjects never used harsh words or shouted, as this is considered an example of polite behavior. Consequently, the children will imitate what their fathers do.

Discussion

The moral development of children, especially during the formative years of 5-6, is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors, including the pivotal role of single fathers. This discussion delves into the nuanced dynamics of how single fathers contribute to their children's moral upbringing and the broader implications of these interactions within the societal and educational contexts. Children learn morals based on their perception of the world and the messages conveyed to them daily by the people who interact with them consistently. While the family unit, represented by the single father in this context, plays a crucial role in moral development, the positive effects on this development process are also significantly shaped by opportunities for children to engage in roles provided by peer groups, schools, and the broader community.

Single fathers, often juggling the dual responsibilities of caregiving and providing for their family, face unique challenges in nurturing the moral development of their children. Despite these challenges, the direct teachings about respect for elders and the importance of not demeaning others illustrate the hands-on approach single fathers employ. These teachings are more than mere instructions; they are lived experiences shared between father and child, making the lessons more relatable and impactful.

Based on the findings presented, children raised by single fathers experience a balanced moral development between capable and less capable. This is due to single fathers sometimes being busy with their work, leading to the child occasionally being left in the care of their grandmother or grandfather. Additionally, single fathers teach their children directly about respecting elders and not looking down on others through practice, as it is more easily applied to the child. This aligns with research findings stating that parents play a role in fostering children's manners within the family by providing punishment when children are difficult to manage (Dewi Yuliana et al., 2021; Wahyudi & Arsana, 2014). Furthermore, single parents also mention that the role of parents in the family is as motivators, facilitators, and mediators, making parents the place for a child to shape their character for the better (Faizah et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the environment in which children are raised, including the extended family and community, plays a significant role in reinforcing the moral values taught by single fathers. The interaction with grandparents, for example, offers additional layers of moral learning and reinforces respect and empathy towards others. However, the influence of peer groups, schools, and the broader society cannot be understated. These external factors offer children a platform to practice the moral principles instilled by their fathers, allowing them to navigate complex social dynamics and understand the consequences of their actions in various settings.

Children learn morals based on how they view the world and the messages sent daily by those who interact with them consistently. Although families play a crucial role in moral development, the positive impacts on the moral development process are also due to the opportunities for children to take on roles provided by peer groups, schools, and the broader community. These external influences complement the foundational moral guidance provided by the family, offering children a diverse range of social contexts in which to apply and test their developing moral understanding. This broader social interaction enriches the child's moral framework, allowing them to adapt and refine their behaviors and attitudes in various settings beyond the immediate family environment (Fadlan & K, 2019; Jamiatul et al., 2020; Rina Fitria & Deni Widjayatri, 2023).

Conclusion

Based on the data obtained from this research, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the diverse methods employed by single fathers in teaching moral education to their children. Some teach by advising, instilling good manners, and providing examples or habits. This is evident as the majority of the children are capable of speaking politely, engaging in worship, maintaining personal cleanliness, and apologizing when they make mistakes. From these habits, one can discern the moral development of children when educated by a single parent (single father). The roles of single fathers in this research include being caregivers, educators, mentors, and friends. This study reveals the impact of single fathers on the moral development of their children, as single parents have successfully fulfilled the roles of nurturing their children, educating, guiding, and being friends to them. This can be observed from the efforts made by single parents (single fathers) in maintaining their children's moral development.

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