

Optimizing Understanding Of Children's Values In Improving Children's Quality

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Abstract

The presence of children in the family can mean different things to different parents. It will indirectly affect the aspects that are prioritized in parenting. Therefore, this article will discuss the value of children to parents in depth. This research used a mixed-method approach. Sampling was conducted using stratified random sampling in 7 Community Health Centers in July-August 2019. Data were collected using questionnaires through interviews and focus group discussions. Data were processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics program and analyzed descriptively. This research shows that

functional/instrumental value is the value most perceived by parents in Surabaya (39.09%). In addition, the people of Surabaya consider no difference in values and upbringing between boys and girls (52.73%). Their love for their toddlers is shown through excellent and affectionate care (88.2%). The happiest thing for parents with children is having friends and entertainment (43.6%). Surabaya society perceives children more in terms of functional/instrumental values. The functional value of children is so important to parents that parents must try to show affection. It is done through caring for the child lovingly and adequately, providing education, health care, and an appropriate environment.

Keywords: Value of children, Parenting, Quality of children, Health care, Child health.

Introduction

Children are an endowment and are generally something that parents crave. In some aspects, children are considered an investment for parents. Children can be a place for parents to lean on in their old age so parents will provide the best for their children. For parents, children are everything, and they are willing to sacrifice anything for their children. The presence of a child in a family can have a different meanings for each parent. It will indirectly affect the more highlighted/prioritized aspects of childcare.

According to Hoffman, L. W, et al (1978), the advantages of having children include a bond of affection, a means to change and gain new experiences, a means of self-development, honing competence and creativity, and a sense of security in old age. The research results by Oliveira, J (2015) state that one of the values of children for parents is that having children can increase support for old age and makes it possible for parents not to work beyond the retirement age limit.

Nauck, B (2014) states that parents expect children can increase their comfort of parents in the future by actively contributing to helping family finances. In addition, children can also increase social acceptance/recognition of parents in society because children are still a status symbol, complementary to the family or a component that the family should own.

Values are divided into four types, including functional/instrumental, cost/sacrifice, experiential/hedonic, and symbolic/expressive values (Smith, J.B. & Colgate, 2007). Meanwhile, according to Schwartz, S.H (2005), values consist of

10 types: security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and power.

The value of children for parents, can be seen through the fact that children are a place for parents to pour out love, and children are a source of happiness and hope for parents. The importance of children in the family means that parents generally look forward to having children. Even today, children are one of the benchmarks in society for the perfection of a family.

Various children's values toward parents are influenced by various things, including social-structural conditions (Nauck, B, 1989). In African countries, children can secure conjugal bonds, offer social security, help as future workers, confer social status, secure property and inheritance rights, provide continuity through lineage, and meet emotional needs (Dyer, S. J, 2007). It reinforces the possibility that children's scores may vary in each region, even for each individual.

Children need a lot of time and effort to be successful, and their success is the responsibility of their parents (Murphy, R. D, 1999). Toddlerhood is a crucial period in child development. Toddlerhood is a golden period that can have a significant influence in shaping a child's future. The value of children/family and society's perceptions in viewing and treating toddlers is essential because it is the basis of the efforts that will be given by parents and families that affect the growth and development of children, especially at the age of five.

Therefore, this article will discuss in more depth the value of children for parents or the family and people around them that underlie the attitudes and behaviors of the parents in maintaining children's health and growth.

Method

This study aims to describe the value of children to parents or the families and people around them that underlie parents' attitudes and behaviors in maintaining children's health and growth. This research expects to describe the values children have for parents and show what parents or related health workers can do to improve the quality of children and make children conform to the values perceived by these parents.

This study used a mixed-method approach by collecting data through questionnaires (quantitative) and FGDs (qualitative). The research population in this article is mothers of

toddlers who live in the working area of 7 Health Centers assisted by the Airlangga University Stretching program in 2015-2017, namely the Mulyorejo, Kalijudan, Bulak Banteng, Simolawang, Kedurus, Tenggilis, and Sememi Health Centers. With stratified random sampling, a sample of 97 respondents was obtained from a total population of 26.348. From the minimum number of respondents of 97 people, the number of respondents obtained in this study was 110. This research was conducted in Surabaya for two months.

The variable used in this study is the child's value. Children's value in this study is defined as the perception of family and society in viewing and treating toddlers. The child's value is further divided into four sub-variables according to Smith, J.B. & Colgate, M (2007), including:

1. Functional/instrumental value
2. Cost/sacrifice value
3. Experiential/hedonic value
4. Symbolic/expressive value

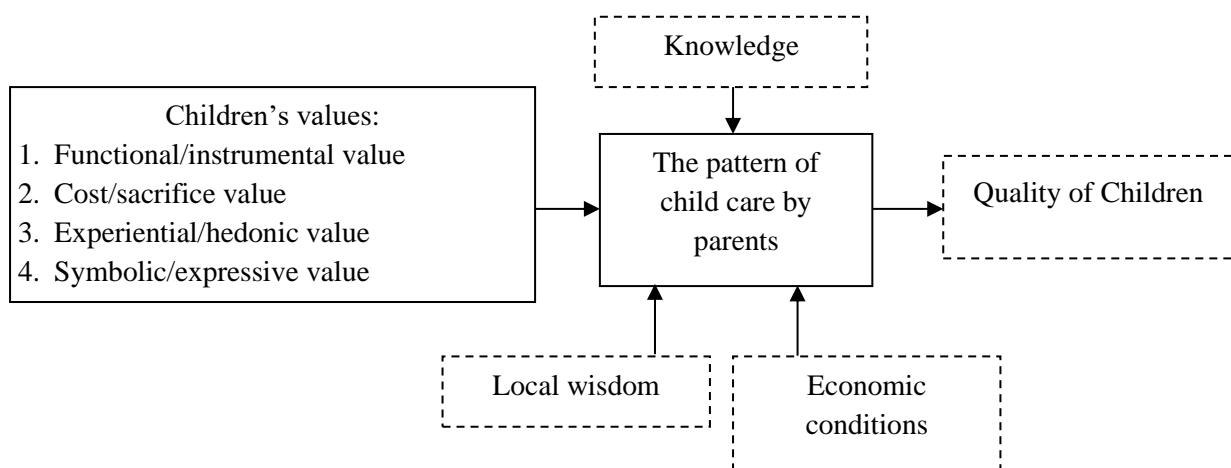


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results

Based on the data collection conducted at 7 Public health centers in Surabaya for two months, the data collection results can be seen in Figure 2 – Figure 6.

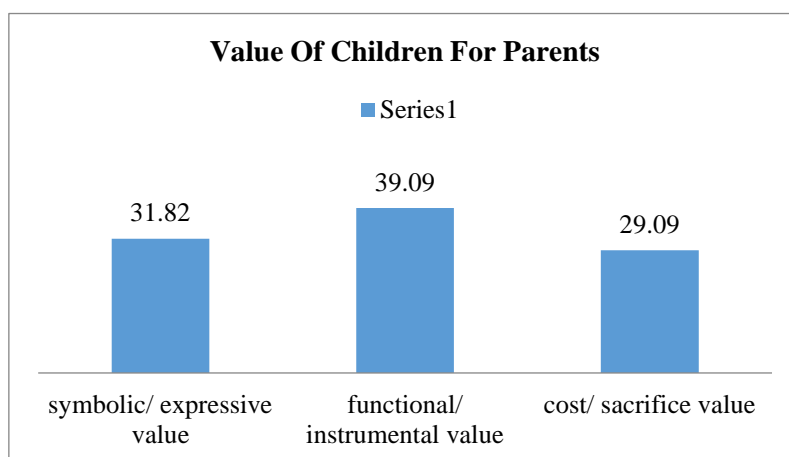


Figure 2. Value of Children for Parents

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that functional/instrumental value is the child's value parents most feel in Surabaya. These functional/instrumental values include being a friend so the parents are not lonely and as the successor of the lineage. Symbolic/expressive values include giving happiness and enthusiasm for life, a sense of pride and complementing social status, and gifts from God. While the cost/sacrifice value includes the carrier of sustenance and blessings.

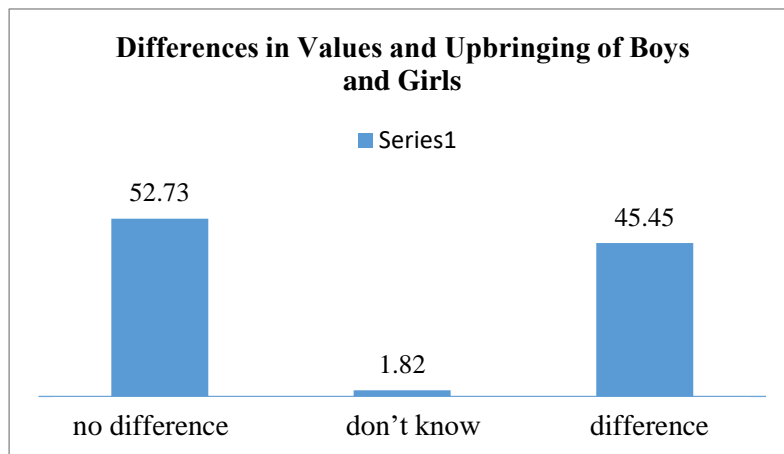


Figure 3. Differences in Values and Upbringing of Boys and Girls

Meanwhile, based on Figure 3, it can be seen that the Surabaya City community considers there are no differences in values and upbringing between boys and girls (52,73%). However, another 45,45% stated that there are differences. These differences include attitude and treatment due to differences in children's character and the characters to be formed. Nevertheless, there is no difference between boys and girls regarding affection.

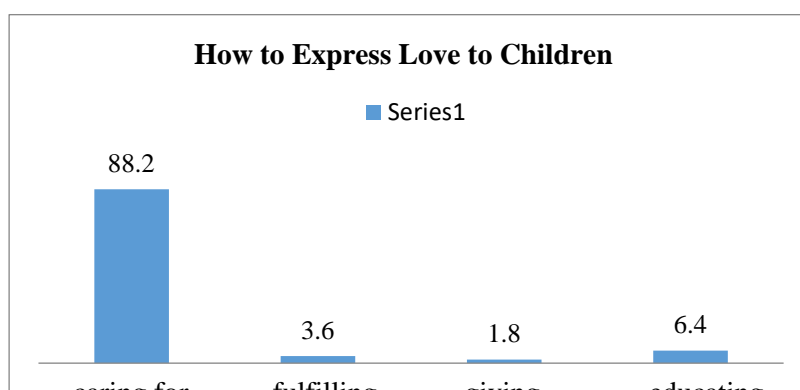


Figure 4. How to Express Love to Children

The majority of parents in Surabaya show love to their toddlers by taking good and loving care of them (88,2%). Only a few parents show their love by educating their children early, fulfilling their children's wishes, and especially giving proper affection. It shows that caring for children is the best way parents can show their love for them.

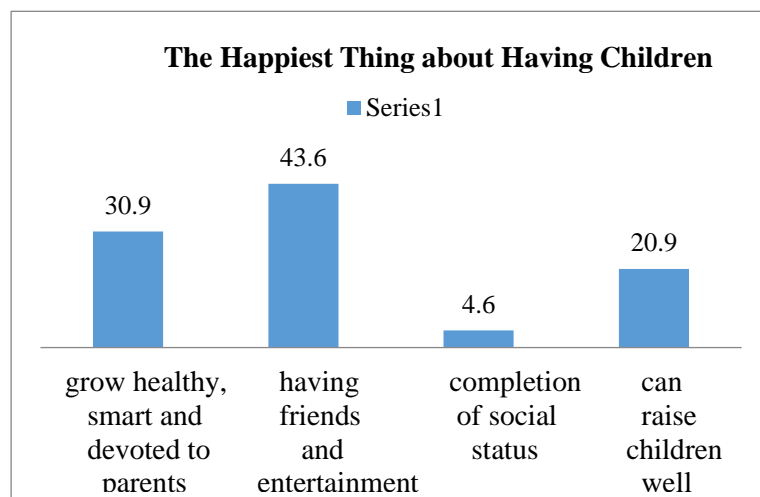


Figure 5. The Happiest Thing about Having Children

Figure 5. shows that what makes parents happiest about having children is having friends and entertainment (43,6%). It is a form of functional value.

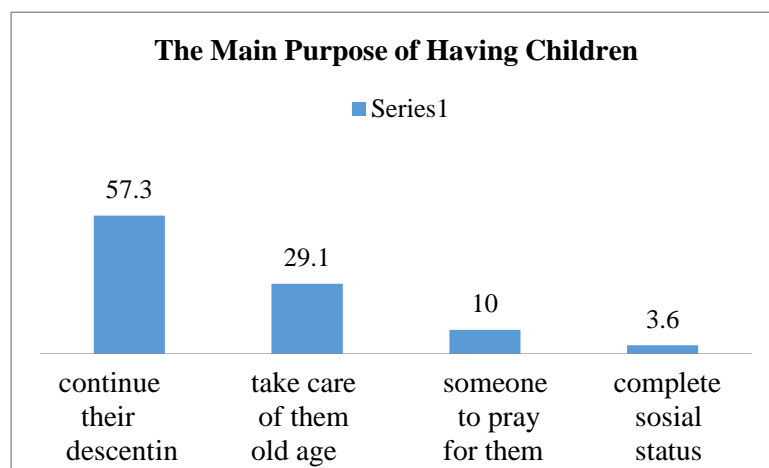


Figure 6. The Main Purpose of Having Children

Based on Figure 6, it can be seen that the main purpose of having children for parents is to continue their descent (57,3%). Meanwhile, the main purpose is to have someone to take care of them in their old age, pray for them, and complete their social status is the main goal for parents to have children. Continuing the lineage is part of the functional/instrumental value. It is consistent with Figure 2, which states that functional/instrumental value is the highest value perceived by parents with children

Table 1. Crosstabulation Between Value of Children and Daily Parenting

		Daily Parenting						Total	
		Themselves		Self and Others		Others			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Value of Children	Symbolic/ Expressive Value	22	62.9	11	31.4	2	5.7	35	100
	Functional/ Instrumental Value	31	72.1	10	23.3	2	4.7	43	100
	Cost/ Sacrifice Value	23	71.9	9	28.1	0	0.0	32	100

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that parents who perceive children as having functional/instrumental value are more likely to care for their children compared to those who perceive children as having symbolic/expressive value and cost/sacrifice value.

Discussion

Children are the pride and most valuable treasure for parents. According to Friedman, D., et al (1994), the value of children is obtained from their capacity to reduce uncertainty for a woman and increase marital solidarity for partners. Based on the study results, many parents in Surabaya perceive their children as having functional/instrumental values. Functional/instrumental focuses more on the characteristics of a thing, such as being helpful or having a specific function (Smith, J.B. & Colgate, M.,

2007). Functional/instrumental value in this study is the extent to which something has the desired characteristics, is useful, or performs the desired function. According to the results, the value of children for parents is as a friend so as not to be lonely and continue their offspring. Therefore, parents must create a comfortable environment for their children. In addition, for children to be good friends with their parents, parents need to establish intense communication with them, which can also positively affect children's care (Kurniati, Euis., et al, 2021). So that later it can also improve the quality of child care.

Parents in Surabaya also stated that there was no difference in values or upbringing between boys and girls. The research by Caughy, M. O., et al (2016) states that the upbringing of boys and girls is no different. Only a few parents stated differences in upbringing between boys and girls. The difference is caused by the difference in the character to be formed between boys and girls. Boys are formed to be strong and not easily afraid, while girls are formed to be gentle. In addition, the statement that there are differences in parenting styles is also based on the opinion that it does not have to be a different gender. Each child will receive different treatment because each child has a different character and approach. The results of the study align with research conducted by (Vyas, et al, 2016) that there is no significant difference seen in authoritarian parenting styles by parents between boys and girls.

Children's values are essential to parents, making them try to provide their children with the best. The study results show that taking excellent and loving care is the way most parents do. It follows Breiner H & Ford M (2016), which states that children need care that improves physical, mental, and emotional health. While educating children early, fulfilling their wishes, and giving love is naturally the way parents least go about it. It can happen because the provision of proper affection has not provided satisfaction for parents in their mindset to provide the best for their children. Meanwhile, educating children from childhood and fulfilling their wishes can provide different interpretations for each parent. It is because educating children early and meeting their needs is often subjective and depends on each parent's abilities.

Exclusive breastfeeding is one of the efforts to generate value for children. In exclusive breastfeeding, it is not only the fulfillment of child nutrition but also the formation of an inner bond between mother and child. Based on research conducted by Nisa et al. (2021), exclusive breastfeeding has several benefits for babies and mothers, including protection against the risk of

infection in infants and optimizing children's cognitive development.

Fulfillment of exclusive breastfeeding needs strong social support both internally and externally. Research conducted by Nisa, N. Damayanti, et al. (2021) stated that the most related to exclusive breastfeeding behavior include psychological capital, self-leadership, breastfeeding self-efficacy, and family support. Strengthening exclusive breastfeeding efforts will have an impact on improving the child.

Having friends and entertainment is the main thing that makes parents happy with the presence of children. It is under research conducted by Hansen, T (2011) states that children are often stated as a vital way to fill the day and provide happiness to parents and others around them. Children are the most important and most wanted thing by parents. Meanwhile, seeing children grow nicely and be devoted to their parents, especially seeing children as mere completeness of social status, is not the primary source of parents' happiness with the presence of children. Humans are social beings who need others from their youth to their old age. The presence of children will provide friends and entertainment for a relatively long period and can be a source of security and comfort for parents.

The main goal of people in Surabaya to have children is to continue their descent. It is still influenced by socio-structural conditions, where the existence of these lineages will provide happiness and pride for them, especially if the recorded lineage has quality with a good track record. Efforts to maintain bloodlines are essential, according to Maccoby, E E (2000), who states that continuing offspring and maintaining the quality of offspring is important, especially for maintaining child development. Children are the continuation of the lineage expected and coveted by parents. This expectation is also because children are the successors of family traditions, heirs to parental assets (which are material in nature) on the one hand, heirs to customary obligations of the environment of relatives and society (Pratama, 2017).

Paying attention to nutritional fulfillment and emotional support for children is the best way to show affection. Fulfillment of these physical, mental and spiritual needs will significantly influence the formation of the character and quality of children. It is under Bissoli, M. F (2014) and Kohl H. W & Cook H. D (2013) stated that child development and the formation of a child's personality require comprehensive support, historically and socially. Input in the form of good support for parents is expected to realize other children's values which are every

parent's hope. Therefore, parents can provide good care to children by providing care that has been provided by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which includes regular primary physical examinations, assessment of physical and mental development and screening for various disorders, such as hearing loss and others (C.L. Lu, et al, 2020). Hopefully this will improve the quality of child care, in which case support from health workers is also needed.

The child's quality of life must also be maintained from the womb through adherence to ANC. Limited awareness of being pregnant, alongside personal beliefs and myths in some women in Surabaya, shaped the rapid uptake of ANC. Husbands, families, and friends could influence pregnant women's thoughts on pregnancy and ANC uptake to support positive outcomes = (Jones et al., 2021). In addition, the volunteer, cadre, midwife of the Public Health Center, Sub-Village midwife, and hospital staff have a role in increasing pregnant mothers' capability and motivation in maintaining their health, reminding them to check their pregnancy at the health service center, persuading early breastfeeding intention and exclusive breastfeeding as well as helping them to process their national health insurance participation. Support from all parties can improve the quality of life of children when they are born (Damayanti et al., 2020).

Caring for and raising children needs to be done well by parents and related parties such as health workers. Health is an important aspect of supporting the development and quality of children. Health workers are one of those who play a direct role in the health aspects of children. Therefore, in terms of responsiveness, empathy, and compassion, optimal support from health workers is needed, supported by qualified health skills and equipment. It follows a study by Sinclair (2017), stating that empathy and compassion are the characteristics of health workers whom patients most like. So, especially for children, the nature of health workers is significant to help grow a sense of fun and comfort with health workers. In addition, adequate supporting resources through strengthening the Health Management Information System (HMIS) can support the Maternal and Child Health Program (Damayanti, 2019). The commitment of health workers is indeed to make a strong intention to carry out health services according to the quality standards that should be, this will ultimately impact the PHC's performance (Wulandari et al., 2019).

In this study, the value of children with daily parenting show that functional/instrumental value refers more to the

extent to which children are able to have the characteristics expected and instilled by parents. Parenting patterns raised independently by parents support the formation of strong characteristics and personalities (Saputri and Marzuki, 2021). In this case, parents have an important role in instilling values, and personality in children's growth and development. In accordance with the concept of parenting, parents are the first place for children in the learning process towards the social environment, which will later affect children's behavior (Brannon, 2008).

The cost/ sacrifice value of children is the value where children have a long-term investment to improve the family economy in the future. Children are the main and valuable resource, children are a representation of parents in the future. Parents' investment in children is realized in the process of good care, education at school, and fulfillment of balanced nutrition contained in the daily diet for maximum child development (Martiasuti, 2020). Thus, the fulfillment of nutrition for mothers and families, in particular, is also needed, which is influenced by the condition of the community's economic status. The ability of families to fulfill their daily needs will impact the diversity of food available to meet the nutritional needs of families, especially children (Jap et al., 2019).

The type of parenting also has an impact on creating value for children. Research conducted by Murdiningsih and Komariah (2019) states that the type of parenting is related to child development which is indicated by the consistent behavior of parents given to children. The results of this parental behavior will have an influence felt by the child as a form of parental affection and concern for the child (Johari Talib et al., 2011). In caring for their children, parents are also influenced by the culture in their environment. In addition, parents are also colored by certain attitudes in maintaining, guiding, and directing their children. This attitude is reflected in different parenting patterns for their children because parents have certain parenting patterns (Martiasuti, 2020). Each parent provides their parenting pattern for their family because each parent has certain values that are considered the best values for their family.

Conclusion

Communities in Surabaya, Indonesia, perceive children more in terms of functional/ instrumental values. Children have a particular functional value for parents, such as being friends, so they are not lonely and the next generation. The value of

children, who are so important to parents, makes parents try to show affection. It is done through efforts to care for children lovingly and adequately by providing education, health care, and a suitable environment for children. Children are a source of happiness for parents, primarily if children can fulfill the role of friends and entertainment for parents. The main goal of society to have children is to continue the lineage because it will give the family a sense of pride and happiness.

Raising children is done by paying attention to material and non-material aspects, both the child's physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Later, this support will be very influential in shaping the character and quality of children. Input in the form of good support for parents and other stakeholders, such as health workers, is expected to be able to realize other children's values which are the hope of every parent.

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