

The Responsibility OPF Single Parent; Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y in Fostering Children

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Abstract: *The divorce rate in Indonesia from time to time is always high. This results in the increasing number of children that are raised by single parents (widows or widowers). On the other hand, some facts reveal that children raised by single parents tend to have problematic issues with their surroundings in social life. Meanwhile studies on the responsibility of single parents in fostering children are immensely limited. Therefore this study aims to identify and analyze the responsibilities of the single parents in fostering their children, in order to construct a better and more optimal parenting by single parents. A case study was conducted with qualitative approach. Purposive sampling technique was employed in this study to determine the research subjects. Four single parents were taken as the subject of this study. Interview was administered for the sake of data collection. The data analysis was conducted by administering EMIC analysis in triangulation and ethical analysis (interpretation) based on the analysis of the author associated with some relevant theory. The results of data analysis show that there occurs nine responsibilities carried by single parents in fostering their children.*

I. Introduction

Indonesia is the country with the largest population in South-East Asia. According to Indonesia 2010 population census, the number of Indonesia population is approximately 237 million people who inhabit the islands throughout the archipelago state. The population of Indonesia have different religious backgrounds, diverse cultures and languages, as well as ethnic and racial backgrounds. Likewise they recognize the patterns and system of children parenting in distinctive ways as well.

The parenting on children is considered the most important and fundamental process in preparing them to become a part of society. Therefore, parents are obliged to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their children, as stated in the word of God surah An-Nisa verse 9: “*And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.*”, (QS. An-Nisaa [4]: 9).

Should parenting on children is carried by both their mother and father. However it is not rare nowadays that a child is raised only by one parental figure, either the mother or father (single parents). This phenomenon could occur due to the parent divorce, death, or left without status thus lead to the increased responsibility carried by the single parents in fostering their children. Sometimes children who were raised by single parents can achieve successful life, but in many cases it turns on the contrary, that the children development did not meet the expectations of family and society.

Based on the data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the divorce rate in the country in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 are respectively 285.184 cases, 158.119 cases, 372.577 cases, 324.527, and 354.000 cases. Regarding the numbers, it is pretty clear that the trend of divorce in Indonesia is quite high year in year out. This is, of course, resulted in the increasing number of children that have to be fostered by single parents.

In many cases, the extent of responsibility of single parents in fostering children is still very alarming and causes for concern. This resulted in the children having problematic issues with their social life. By all means it is in accordance with Djamarah (2004:49) that in a household lead by a single parent, it is often found children who lose or do not have role models. The parents, who are expected by their children to be their role models, fall out and do not be able to show exemplary good attitudes and behavior. Consequently the children get disappointed with their parents. they feel restless, uneasy, and insecure. The children's dejection feelings are often exploited by some bad boys to drag the children into *jahiliyyah* attitudes and behavior and cause the children to comport themselves in undesired negative behaviors.

Parents, especially the single parents, may necessarily come from different generations. According to Gravett and Throckmorton (2007:15), current people can be classified into five generations, namely (1) radio babies [or silent generation] who were born in 1930-1945, (2) baby boomers who were born around 1946-1964, (3) Xers generation [or baby busters] born in 1965-1976, (4) Yers generation (or whgeneration Y) born in 1977-1990, and (5) of Millennials born in 1991-present. Certainly each generation administer different kinds of responsibility in fostering children.

Accordingly, research and study focusing on the responsibilities of single parents in fostering children based on generation become exceptionally essential to conduct for constructing a better parenting system and diminishing the tendency of negative behaviors on the children raised by single parents. Purposively, this study focused on identifying and analyzing the responsibilities of single parents in fostering their children.

II. Research Method

This study conducted a case study with qualitative approach. The subject of reaserch were single parents (widows and widowers) who were divorced within a long period of time (3 years at minimum) and still fostering their children as well as the children were still in their charge. The key informants in this study were religious scholars, education experts, and cultural experts in Bengkulu, and the nearest neighbours of research subjects as supporting informants. Purposive sampling was employed in this study to determine the research subjects.

The subjects of this study consisted of (1) two single parents of baby boomers that PS and PD, (2) two single parents of Generation X that PN and ID, and (3) two single parents of Generation Y namely BN and IW. Besides, four children of the subjects were also taken as supporting resources.

The data analysis was conducted by administering EMIC analysis in triangulation and ethical analysis (interpretation) based on the analysis of the author associated with the relevant theory. To simplify the process of data analysis in this study, NVivo software application was used. NVivo is an application of qualitative data processing produced by QSR International.

III. Findings and Discussion

Baby boomers

Baby boomers refers to those people who were born in the years 1946-1964 (Gravett and Throckmorton, 2007: 15). This generation is also called cold war generation or the generation of economic growth (Tapscott, 2009: 13). The generation of baby boomers is greatly influenced by television since it (the television) is a communication tool that turned up during the generation and becomes the most innovative communication tool at that time. Baby boomer generation is characterized as ambitious, greedy, and giving birth to many children (Gravett and Throckmorton, 2007: 38).

The responsibilities of single parents from baby boomer generation in fostering children include (1) to teach their children to do household [e.g. cleaning house and home appliance], (2) to teach their children to cook, (3) to teach their children to keep their house clean and beautiful, (4)to teach their children doing grocery shopping. As informed by PD as follows:

“I taught my children how to wash dishes, sweep the rooms, clean the beds where the linens and pillows should be neatly arranged, the blankets and towels need to be dried in the sun, as well as to wipe our house’s window glasses, clean our courtyard, water and fertilize the plants, and taught how to turn on the stove, to boil the water, cook some rice, fry tempeh, cook vegetables, and to serve the menus on table from the arrangement of main dishes, drinking water, the cutlery, up to the usage of movable food cover. They were learning to mop the entire house, clean the bathrooms, drain the water containers, though I did not teach them to take care of stock since I was worried of them being in contact with any bacteria. They were also taught to go grocery shopping at the traditional market or nearby shops, and I gave them a note of some goods to buy and the pricelist which I already checked out in advance.”

In contrast to PD, PS exactly did not put any concern about teaching his/her child to be independent. He/she was not much involved with the child. He/she did not go on vacation or spend leisure time with the child. He/she let the child do their own business by oneself.

Generation X

Generation X covers people who were born between 1965 and 1976 (mind 1960’s and the early 1980’s) [Gravett dan Throckmorton, 2007:4]. Coming after the massive birthrate of Baby Boomers, this generation’s birthrate had dropped dramatically. Due to certain circumstances where the jobs and employment was already full of Baby Boomers, the generation X people demanded their children to mature faster and be independent so they could fend for themselves to survive. While in the Baby Boomers period the economic growth, but not so in this generation. Generation X was experiencing high inflation. The technology turned up and developed to a greater extent than in the Baby Boomers period, namely the innovation of music players by cassette, CD, DVD, and MP3 player, as well as the beginning of the accretion of internet, answering machine, and voicemail.

The responsibilities of single parent of generation X in fostering children based on the explanation of PN, cover: (1) to teach children how to cook, (2) to teach cleaning the house, (3) to watch their children’s intercommunication and association, (4) to invite the children to go on vacation, (5) to demand children to keep in touch and silaturahmi with other family members and relatives, (6) to teach children to behave courteously to

others, and (7) to give children the opportunity to contribute to social activities in their neighborhood. In everyday life PN applied certain rules to his/her children, as when the children going out late, he/she imposed a 12 p.m. curfew, and the demands to ask for parent's permit before going out. The rules were made by PN himself, not made based on deliberative decision.

The responsibilities of single parent of generation X in fostering children based on the explanation of ID, include: (1) to teach children how to cook, (2) to teach ironing clothes, (3) to invite children to do leisure activities together. In their daily life, ID provided opportunities for the children to engage in social activities with surroundings (in their neighborhood).

Generation Y

According to Gravett and Throckmorton (2007: 45) generation Y covers people born between 1977 and the year 1990. Those individuals are sometimes referred to as generation why. Generation Y demands greatly on personal safety. The children of generation Y are taught to be afraid of strangers either at home (close surroundings) or from outsiders due to the frequent kidnappings. They could see the murders, shootings, and the war broadcasted live on TV. They as well live in fear of HIV AIDS, Antrak, and other biogenetic threats.

Technology is something that has the greatest influence on generation Y. They can access the internet at home, school, work, a friend's house, as well at library. The people of generation Y spend most of their time in front of computer screen either for work or merely surfing in the internet. They are able to play game online with friends from all over the world, and even they could send instant messages for 24 hours.

The responsibilities of single parent of generation Y in fostering children based on the explanation of BN cover: (1) to provide a sense of equity to their children, (2) to give opportunities for the children to have activities with their friends, (3) to introduce the children to other familiars and relatives, and (4) to invite them to go on vacation. Related to vacation, BN reveals that:

“Going for a walk at Kualo beach on Sundays. Going to Pantai Panjang, to the fishing pond in the hybrid area, and going on marathon at Pantai Panjang early in the mornings. Sometimes cycling together on the beach. Playing at the white sand. Sometimes going for bobo games in Mega Mall. For a vacation outside this town, we go to Pagar Alam, Mount Dempo southern Sumatera. We are seldomly waiting for particular moments. If there is spare time then mostly I do some recreation with my child/ern. While for faraway vacation (outside the town), it is usually when there is fitting moment for family invitation or wedding. Mostly we spend our family time by going to the beach.”

The responsibilities of single parent of generation Y based on the explanation of IW involve: (1) to teach their children cleaning home appliance, (2) to give the opportunities to the children's friends for a visit to their house, (3) to provide moment to spend with children on going for a walk, (4) to provide the children opportunities to play with the kids in the neighborhood. In everyday life, IW imposed a tight control on his/her children to ensure their safety.

The comparison of single parent responsibilities in fostering children of the Baby Boomers, generation X, and generation Y

Baby Boomer generation, generation X, and generation Y have different backgrounds. Therefore, the single parents of the three generations have diverse responsibilities in fostering their children. The responsibilities to foster children of each generation are summerized in the following table.

Table I. Comparison of single parent responsibilities to foster children posits on three generation: Baby Boomers, generation X, and generation Y

Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To teach children on keeping cleanliness • To teach children to meet basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To teach children on keeping cleanliness • To teach children to meet basic needs • To go on vacation with children • To pay attention to and watch their children's intercommunication and association • To teach children to keep in touch and establish good relationship with other family members and relatives • To teach children common courtesy to others • To provide opportunities for their children to interact with society (neighborhood) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide as sense of equity for their children • To go on vacation with children • To provide opportunities for their children to interact with friends • To teach children to keep in touch establish good relationship with other family members and relatives

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IV. Conclusion

Every generation of single parents (Baby Boomers, generation X, and generation Y) have responsibilities to foster their children that may be diversified from each other. In fostering children, Baby Boomers count heavily on keeping cleanliness and fulfilling basic needs. Generation X is the most accentuating with the responsibilities of fostering children. This generation prioritizes teaching their children to keep cleanliness, meet basic needs, interact with friends, keep in touch and establish good relationships, go on vacation, and to keep common courtesy. Generation Y presses with the responsibilities in fostering children in terms of providing a sense of equity, going on vacation together with children, and teaching their children to keep in touch and establish good relationships.

V. Recommendation

Single parents are greatly expected to contribute properly in fostering their children. The children's generation is different from the generation of their parents, so the responsibilities of fostering children should be tailored to the needs of the child generation. Some suggestion for further research is to assess the effects of parenting by single parents who come from different generations on the growth and development of children living in the present generation.

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