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RESEARCH

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Socio Demographic Factors Related to Father Presence in Parenting Adolescents

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Abstract

Father presence plays a crucial role in the emotional and psychological development of adolescents, yet various socio-demographic factors remain barriers to understanding the significance of fathers' role in parenting. Adolescents who grow up without their fathers are more vulnerable to mental health and social problems, which in turn impact their self-esteem and academic achievement. This study aimed to identify the strongest socio-demographic factors associated with the presence of fathers in the care of adolescents in Kudus District. This study used an observational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach, which was analyzed through the chi-square test and binary logistic regression. The sample consisted of 332 purposively selected high school students. Independent variables included gender difference with the child, parents' marital status, father's education, father's occupation, economic status and family function, while the dependent variable was the level of father's presence in parenting. The results of the analysis showed that family function in parenting is the strongest social factor that positively influences father presence in adolescent parenting (OR = 6.651, $p < 0.05$). In addition, the demographic factor of marital status also positively influenced father's presence in adolescent care (OR = 2.447, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, gender differences between father and child, father's education level, father's occupation, and economic status did not have a significant correlation. The study conclusion emphasizes the importance of integrating family functions in an effort to increase father's participation in parenting, as well as the implications for practice of community health workers, family health programs, and school based family programs.

Keywords: Adolescent Parenting, Father Presence, Socio-Demographic Factors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, the Indonesian government has designated November 12 as National Father's Day to encourage fathers' participation in childcare. This was followed by the "Indonesian Emergency Fathers" movement, which targets teenage fathers (3.17% of the 700,000 married men) who are often unprepared due to their low maturity (Hidayah et al., 2023). Data from 2017 showed that 13.35% of women and 3.94% of men became heads of households after separation, with children losing father figures more often than mothers (Wahyuni et al., 2023). The role of fathers in Indonesia is weakened by low family function, changes in marital status, and patriarchy, with 43.8% of high school adolescents reporting low father attendance, despite the crucial presence of both parents for children's success (Yunianti et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

Fathers play an equal role to mothers in adolescents' cognitive, intellectual, behavioral, gender, and religious development, especially during critical periods of identity and emotion (Nel & Yi, 2020; Campbell et al., 2021). Father presence is positively correlated with adolescents' emotional regulation and self-esteem. Research has found that 57.1% of adolescents with low father presence have low self-esteem, 61.7% experience difficulty regulating emotions, and 50.0% exhibit negative sexual behavior, while those with high father presence result in better outcomes (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Adolescents growing up without fathers are at risk for feelings of shame, anger, risky behavior, and long-term mental health disorders (Dwidiyanti et al., 2021; Hanisa et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

Given the high prevalence of father absence in Indonesia and its significant psychosocial impact on adolescents, further identification of the strongest social factors that influence low father presence in adolescent parenting is needed. While qualitative studies have described fathers' participation behaviors in parenting in Indonesia (Astria et al., 2023; Ngewa, 2019; Nurjanah et al., 2023), quantitative research measuring specific factors such as sociodemographics, economic stress, and family functioning remains limited and has not been comprehensively explored, thus providing information on specific predictors of father absence in adolescent childcare in Indonesia. This study identifies the strongest sociodemographic factor of father presence in Kudus Regency.

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that parenting behaviors are shaped by multiple interacting systems, ranging from individual characteristics to broader social and occupational contexts. Within this framework, fathers' presence in adolescent parenting is influenced not only by personal attributes but also by family dynamics and work-related environments (Alias et al., 2024). Socio-demographic factors such as age, education, employment status, and family function can be understood as components of the microsystem and exosystem that shape opportunities and constraints for fathers' presence in parenting.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used an observational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. This study aimed to identify factor related to father presence, which were analyzed using regression methods. The independent variables are gender differences with children, marital status, father's education level, father's occupation, economic status and family function, while the dependent variable is father's presence. The population of this study was all high school students in Kudus Regency, totaling 8,880 people. The sample of 332 students was determined using the Slovin formula. Sampling was done purposively with the following inclusion criteria: actively registered as high school students in Kudus Regency, have a Student Identification Number (NIS), and have a living father. Exclusion criteria included students who were not present during data collection or who did not complete the research process from beginning to end.

The research instrument consisted of a respondent characteristics questionnaire that included age, child, gender difference with child, parents' marital status, father's education,

father's occupation, economic status. The Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ) was used to measure father presence, which includes three main aspects: father-child relationship, beliefs about the father's role, and intergenerational family influence. This questionnaire consisted of 71 items using a 5-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from “never” to “always”. The score range was 71–355. The categorization of father presence was determined using a cut-off point, with a high category assigned when the total score was ≥ 283 and a low category assigned if the total score was < 283 . The validity of the questionnaire ranged from 0.424 to 0.909, with a reliability coefficient of 0.89 (Krampe & Newton, 2006). The researcher realized that the length of the FPQ instrument could potentially cause respondent fatigue and affect data quality. To minimize this, questionnaire completion was conducted under controlled conditions with clear instructions and assistance by enumerators during completion.

The family functioning variable was measured using the family functioning questionnaire (Family APGAR Score). This questionnaire has five items rated on a three-point Likert scale that ranges from 0 (almost never/very rarely), 1 (sometimes), to 2 (almost always). Family functioning was measured using three categorical levels, including highly functioning families (score 7-10), moderately dysfunctional families (score 4-6), and highly dysfunctional families (score 0-3). The reliability test showed excellent reliability (Cronbach Alpha = 0.91) (Ridwan et al., 2023).

Prior data analysis, the research instruments completed by the respondents were checked for accuracy and completeness. A total of 332 respondents filled out the questionnaires completely. There were no missing data, and no respondents were excluded from the study. Data analysis was performed using binary logistic regression with a stepwise backward method. The analytical procedure began with a bivariate analysis using the Chi-square test to examine the association between variables and to determine which variables would be included in the multivariate analysis. This study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of Muhammadiyah Kudus University with ethics permit number 333/Z-7/KEPK/UMKU/VI/2025.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, it was found that the characteristics of the respondents shows that from 322 students studied, the majority were 16 years old as many as 225 respondents (67.8%) and most of the students who were respondents were the first child as many as 146 respondents (44%). Based on the results of the study, it explains that most students are 16 years old. This is in accordance with the data that the average age of high school students in Kudus Regency is 16-18 years old (Kemendikdasmen, 2023). This age range represents the adolescent growth age group, namely between 10 and 24 years of age (Sawyer et al., 2018). Adolescence is a critical stage in the developmental process of life. It is a transitional period when an individual undergoes physical, hormonal, and psychological changes (Hegde et al., 2022). Based on the results of the study, it explains that most students are second children, namely 146 students (44%). The results of previous research explain that firstborn children tend to be closer to their father, firstborn children are required to be disciplined in carrying out tasks at home and have a more dominant character than their younger siblings. The middle child is independent, cheerful, and is more often supported to do their own work. Meanwhile, the youngest child is active and spoiled (Untariana & Sugito, 2022).

Table 1. Socio Demographic Factors Associated with Father Presence in Parenting Adolescents (n=332).

Variable	Category	Low N (%)	High N (%)	Total N (%)	p-value
Child-Father Gender Difference	Yes	93 (49.47%)	95 (50.53%)	188 (100%)	1.000
	No	71 (49.31%)	73 (50.69%)	144 (100%)	
Parental Marital Status	Married	126 (45.65%)	150 (54.35%)	276 (100%)	0.004
	Divorced	38 (67.86%)	18 (32.14%)	56 (100%)	
Father's Education Level	Low–Middle	129 (50.59%)	126 (49.41%)	255 (100%)	0.510
	High	35 (45.45%)	42 (54.55%)	77 (100%)	
Father's Employment Status	Employed	152 (48.25%)	163 (51.75%)	315 (100%)	0.209
	Unemployed	12 (70.59%)	5 (29.41%)	17 (100%)	
Economic Status	> Minimum Wage (IDR 2,680,485.72)	63 (45.00%)	77 (55.00%)	140 (100%)	0.085
	< Minimum Wage (IDR 2,680,485.72)	101 (52.60%)	91 (47.40%)	192 (100%)	
Family Function Category	Well-functioning	58 (30.53%)	132 (69.47%)	190 (100%)	0.000
	Poorly functioning	106 (74.65%)	36 (25.35%)	142 (100%)	
Total		164 (49.40%)	168 (50.60%)	332 (100%)	

The distribution of research variables, encompassing both independent variables and the dependent variable (father's presence), is presented in Table 1. Among the 332 students included in the study, the majority were male, with 188 respondents reporting gender differences with fathers. Most respondents had parents who were married (n = 276), fathers with low to middle educational attainment (n = 255), and working fathers (n = 315). In terms of economic characteristics, 192 respondents reported family incomes below the minimum wage, while 190 respondents came from families categorized as having good family functioning. Regarding the dependent variable, 168 respondents demonstrated a high level of father presence, whereas 164 respondents showed a low level of father presence.

Based on the statistical analysis summarized in Table 1, no significant association was identified between gender differences with children and father's presence in adolescent parenting ($p = 1.000$; $p > 0.05$). Similarly, father's educational level was not significantly associated with father's presence ($p = 0.510$; $p > 0.05$), nor was father's occupation ($p = 0.085$; $p > 0.05$). Family economic status also showed no statistically significant relationship with father's presence in adolescent parenting ($p = 0.209$; $p > 0.05$). In contrast, parental marital status demonstrated a statistically significant and positive relationship with father's presence ($p = 0.004$; $p < 0.05$). In addition, family functioning in parenting was significantly and positively correlated with father's presence ($p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$).

Further analysis indicated that father's presence did not differ significantly based on the child's gender ($p = 1.000$; $p > 0.05$). Empirical findings revealed that levels of father presence, as reflected by emotional involvement, attention, and practical care, were comparable between fathers of sons and fathers of daughters. In other words, differences in child gender do not necessarily predict the level of father presence in parenting (Güder & Ata, 2018). Research shows that fathers do tend to treat boys and girls differently according to social gender norms and stereotypes. For example, fathers engage in more rough play with boys and use more analytical or emotional language with girls. However, these differences relate to the type of interaction rather than the overall intensity of father presence in parenting (Mascaro et al., 2017).

Table 1 explains that there is a statistically significant relationship between parental marital status and father's presence in childcare with a value of $p=0.004$ ($p<0.05$). The results of the study mean that when the family is still complete, the higher the father's presence in childcare. This result is supported by previous research where it was found that parents who remained married reported higher father presence than parents who were cohabiting or in transition (Jumiati, 2025). Unlike legally married couples, cohabiting partners lack a formal foundation for their relational commitment. Consequently, symbolic forms of commitment, such as the father's active participation in childcare and cooperative parenting practices, become particularly important. Several studies on parenting patterns have demonstrated that early paternal involvement serves as a critical predictor of the father's sustained role throughout childhood (Haux & Platt, 2021).

In the context of separated couples, there is a relationship between father presence before separation and continuity of contact after separation. This is due to two factors: first, pre-separation involvement increases the likelihood of judges granting greater access to visitation while strengthening trust in the father's capacity to care; second, intensive involvement from the outset builds a strong emotional bond between father and child, so the relationship is likely to be maintained despite the parents' separation (Haux & Platt, 2021). The role of the family determines the direction of a child's development. Disharmony and alienation within the family can lead to prolonged stress that negatively affects the social, mental and physical health of the individual (Freeks, 2025).

Table 1 explains that there is no statistically significant relationship between father's education level and father's presence in parenting with a value of $p=0.510$ ($p>0.05$). The results of this study indicate that the level of education owned by the father is not a determining factor in how much father presence in childcare. The results of this study are in line with previous research which states that there is no significant relationship between father's education level and father's role in parenting. Although based on cross-distribution analysis, the majority of fathers who play a good role in parenting have a high level of education (Istiyati et al., 2020). Previous research also explains that education level has no effect on parenting patterns (Salim & Safitri, 2020). The role of fathers in parenting is not solely associated with formal education. Information and parenting patterns can be obtained from various other sources, including the development of information technology that allows fathers to obtain parenting knowledge independently. Therefore, the level of formal education is not always the main factor of a father's presence in caring for his child (Istiyati et al., 2020).

As implied from the table 1, there is explains that there is no statistically significant relationship between father's occupation and father's presence in parenting with a value of $p=0.209$ ($p>0.05$). This indicates that although fathers have jobs of various types or statuses, this does not necessarily affect how active or involved the father is in childcare. From another research perspective, similar results emerged that the father's occupation factor is not always a strongest factor of father's presence in parenting (Nuruliah, 2023). According to a study entitled "Work Gains and Strains on Father presence", father's presence in parenting is not only

associated with the father's work status or workload, but is also strongly associated with ecological and personal aspects such as the parenting styles adopted by the father and experiences in his work environment (Diniz et al., 2023). The results of a study entitled Parents' Work and Children's Development: A Longitudinal Analysis examined the influence of parents' work on children's long-term development, highlighting that father's presence is influenced more by the quality of time together and not just employment status (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2020).

Result from the table 1 shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between family economic status and father's presence in parenting with a value of $p=0.085$ ($p>0.05$). The results of this study are in accordance with previous research that there is no significant correlation between parenting at home and family socioeconomic status. The involvement of parenting is not associated with the socioeconomic status of the family. Every family, regardless of socioeconomic status, is equally capable of encouraging and motivating their children to study hard and achieve at school (Qasem, 2018). This underscores the need for parents at all socioeconomic levels to prioritize time and energy in strengthening communication with their children (Yang et al., 2025).

Table 1 explains that there is a statistically significant relationship between family function and father's presence in parenting with a value of $p=0.000$ ($p<0.05$). The results of this study mean that good family function will increase the presence of fathers in childcare. The results of this study are supported by previous research where when family functions cannot be carried out properly, children have a greater potential to feel lonely because of the low level of parental presence in their lives. The relationship between family function and loneliness is mediated by hope, while expressive suppression simultaneously moderates the relationship between hope and loneliness (Yun et al., 2021).

Previous research suggests that in post-divorce families, good family functioning contributes to the quality of adolescent father-child relationships across cultures (Haux & Platt, 2021). Children's relationships with parents play an important role in shaping children's worldview and understanding. Parenting that is full of warmth and responsiveness can be a solid foundation for children's development, providing positive benefits that continue throughout their growth (Heshmati et al., 2021).

Table 1 shows that socio-demographic factors in this study include father and child gender differences, marital status, education level, father's occupation, economic status, and family function. Prior to multivariate analysis, bivariate selection was performed with the chi-square test, 4 of the 6 independent variables met the $p < 0.25$ limit to enter the multivariate test, namely the variables of marital status, economic status, father's occupation, and family function.

Furthermore, Binary Logistic Regression is carried out with the Stepwise Backward method. Selection of the stepwise backward method in binary logistic regression testing can see the best model. Based on table 1, in the first test step, all independent variables were included in the model, it was found that the employment variable produced the largest p value of 0.922. The p value of the income variable is also greater than the 0.05 limit, but because it is still below the p value of the employment variable, it is still included in the model. So in the second test, the employment variable was removed from the model. In the second test, there are still variables with a p value > 0.05 , namely the p value on the income variable of 0.139 so that the income variable does not enter the next test. In the third test, the best model was obtained, namely the variables of marital status and family function had a significant correlation on the presence of fathers in parenting adolescents.

Table 2. Binary Logistic Regression Results Using the Backwards Stepwise Method.

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	95%C.I.for EXP(B)		
							Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Parents' Marital Status (1)	.895	.341	6.884	1	.009	2.447	1.254	4.774
	Family Function (1)	1.895	.252	56.523	1	.000	6.651	4.058	10.900
	Constant	-1.825	.354	26.500	1	.000	.161		

Model Fit Statistics

- Chi-square ($df = 2$) = 4.516, $p = 0.105$

- Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.197$

- Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.262$

- Classification accuracy = 71.7%

Table 2 presents the final binary logistic regression model examining factors associated with fathers' presence in parenting adolescents. Two variables remained statistically significant in the final model. Parents' marital status was significantly associated with fathers' presence, with married parents showing higher odds of fathers' presence in adolescent parenting (OR = 2.45; 95% CI: 1.25–4.77; $p = 0.009$). In addition, family function demonstrated the strongest association with fathers' presence, where higher family function was associated with substantially increased odds of fathers' presence in parenting adolescents (OR = 6.65; 95% CI: 4.06–10.90; $p < 0.001$).

Based on these results, it can be concluded that family function is the strongest socio-demographic factor associated with the presence of fathers in adolescent care. This result is supported by previous research which states that a well-functioning family makes fathers feel involved in child care. The complexity of family functioning is seen in several aspects, such as the role of the father, relationships and communication within the family, child characteristics, and the role of the mother as the primary caregiver (Spurr et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown a positive relationship, where parental insight or mind-mindedness is potentially associated with various variables related to family functioning, as well as with developmental outcomes in both parents and children (Charpentier Mora et al., 2023).

From pregnancy to the beginning of a child's life, one of the important tasks of fathers is to ensure that family conditions and functions are created that support the relationship between mother and baby to develop well. In this case, fathers need to overcome various practical problems, such as providing a safe and comfortable place to live, providing financial support, ensuring basic needs are met, establishing relationships with the environment outside the family, protecting the family, and resolving problems and conflicts that arise (Baldoni et al., 2021).

Optimal family functioning is achieved when cohesion and flexibility are at balanced levels, while imbalances at either end of the continuum reflect dysfunction. Communication and emotional support in the relationship between parents and children have an important role in preventing addictive behavior. The type and quality of communication, as well as the emotional bond between family members, are important aspects that determine optimal individual development (Jimeno et al., 2022). Limitations of this study include important unmeasured variables such as father's age, number of children, father's length of employment, mother's involvement, and family structure (nuclear/relatives), which could potentially influence father presence.

4. CONCLUSION

This study identified the key socio-demographic factors associated with fathers' presence in adolescent care in Kudus District. The results of the analysis showed that family function in

parenting was the strongest social factor that positively influenced father presence in adolescent parenting. In addition, the demographic factor of marital status was also found to positively contribute to father presence. Meanwhile, gender differences between father and child, father's education level, type of employment, and family economic conditions did not show a significant influence. These findings confirm the importance of paying attention to family functioning as a strategy to increase fathers' participation in caregiving, while providing implications for nursing practice and the development of family health programs. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. Important variables were not measured, including fathers' age, number of children, length of employment, mothers' involvement, and family structure (nuclear or extended family), all of which may be associated with fathers' presence in parenting. Future research is therefore recommended to expand the study area, involve a larger and more diverse sample, and incorporate these variables to improve the generalizability and depth of understanding regarding factors associated with fathers' presence in adolescent parenting.

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