



The Influence of Father Involvement on the Responsible Attitudes of Children Aged 5-6 Years

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

*Received: December, 10
2024*

Revised: December, 20 2024

Accepted: June 20 2024

Keywords:

*Early Childhood,
Father Involvement,
Responsibility*



bit.ly/jpaUNY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is an influence of father involvement on the responsible attitudes of children aged 5–6 years. Using a correlational quantitative approach, 96 fathers were randomly selected from a population of 429 fathers in Medan Tuntungan District. The instruments used were a father involvement questionnaire based on Pleck's theory (2010) and a child responsibility attitude questionnaire from Harris & Bean (2001). Data were analyzed using simple linear regression techniques, which revealed a significant relationship between father involvement and children's sense of responsibility, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.737 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.544. This indicates that father involvement contributes 54.4% to the development of children's sense of responsibility at an early age. These findings emphasize the importance of the father's role, not only physically but also emotionally, in parenting. The researchers recommend educational programs and systematic support for fathers to better understand their role in fostering children's responsibility from an early age. Such support can contribute to more optimal social-emotional development in children.

INTRODUCTION

Responsibility is part of social-emotional development. Responsibility is a positive force in the social environment that helps shape a good personality, so responsibility is a conscious action that makes people more independent (Widiastuti & Elshap, 2015). Responsibility is also associated with developmental stages and reflects the extent to which an individual is responsible for themselves and their environment (Fuadia, 2022). Rochmah (2016) states that responsibility is a human perception of actions and deeds, whether intentional or unintentional. According to Lickona (1991) in the book "Educating For Character," responsibility is performing work or tasks within the family, school, or any other environment with wholehearted effort and striving for the best.

Behaviors that demonstrate responsibility in young children include taking care of their personal belongings, putting things back in their place, completing tasks assigned by others, valuing time, obeying and following rules, and being able to take care of themselves (Salsabila and Nurmaniah, 2021). Parents need to teach and nurture a sense of responsibility from an early age, but it must be appropriate to the child's abilities (Ramdhani et al., 2019). This makes children feel protected, guided, and loved. The family is the primary source of a child's education, but parents do not fully accompany children throughout their developmental process (Hurlock, 1999).

Training children from an early age to be responsible is very important. Responsibility is not an innate trait; it must be learned and practiced through experience (Clemes & Bean, 2001). The role of parents is necessary in shaping this attitude by creating positive involvement between children and parents. Not only mothers but also fathers play a role in this, ensuring that parental care in children's



development is maximized (Jailani, 2014). Langeveld (in Rohmah, 2016) states that through modeling and habit formation, children can learn about the value of goodness, namely the attitude of responsibility, and through habit formation, children will become accustomed to doing responsible things, whether for themselves or others. It is hoped that fathers' involvement in shaping responsible attitudes is not only physical but also psychological. According to Allen & Daly (in Puteri & Rudi, 2021), fathers' involvement is not only about positive interaction but also paying more attention to children's development and forming a bond of togetherness. According to classical theory, the father figure is merely a provider (the family breadwinner), while the mother is seen as expressive (full of love) (Erawati in Lamb, 1981). However, this perspective is beginning to shift, with fathers increasingly taking on a direct role in childcare.

Based on interviews with classroom teachers and principals in several kindergartens in the Medan Tuntungan subdistrict, it was found that 75% of children had problems with responsibility. Researchers found that children in the Medan Tuntungan subdistrict exhibited irresponsible behaviors, such as not taking care of their belongings and not tidying up their toys and equipment after use. Usually, children leave things as they are after playing without wanting to tidy up. Children also do not show any willingness to apologize if they make a mistake with their friends. Another problem encountered by the researcher during the interviews was the minimal involvement of fathers in the educational world at the school, with most of the children's education being left to the mothers.

Batak culture tends to view child-rearing as the responsibility of mothers, while fathers play a more active role as family leaders in the social sphere (Handayani, 2018). Research by Sibarani et al. (2019) shows that fathers in Toba Simosir are generally less involved because they are busy working and have social habits outside the home. This results in minimal involvement of fathers in child-rearing. UNICEF (Meuko, 2018) also notes that low awareness among fathers of the importance of their role remains a common issue. Yet fathers play a crucial role as role models for their children.

The lack of father involvement in childcare has a direct impact on the development of children's responsibility. In Indonesia, most fathers who are involved in childcare are still limited to being physically present or helping when they have free time. Emotional involvement and active roles in accompanying children's development are still minimal (Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2020). For example, Muslihatun and Santi (2022) noted that only around 10.7% of fathers consider childcare to be their primary responsibility. Other factors include time constraints and emotional barriers that hinder fathers' involvement in childcare (Irawan, 2024).

On the other hand, fathers' involvement in childcare has positive impacts on children's development. The results of McMunn et al.'s (2017) study show that children who have close and warm relationships with their fathers exhibit better social behavior, including in terms of discipline, personal responsibility, and adaptability. Fathers who are consistently involved can be a source of moral support that encourages children to take responsibility for their own actions. This is in line with the findings of Hardiningrum (2024) that fathers who actively guide, direct, and set real examples produce children who are more confident and able to manage their behavior. Research in the city of Jambi also found that fathers who actively engage in educating their children with values of discipline and responsibility result in better character development in children (Irawan, 2024). Thus, it is clear that a father's involvement is not merely about physical presence but is an important foundation in shaping a child's sense of responsibility and integrity from an early age.

Similarly, Purwindarini, Hendriyani, & Deliana (2014) in their research showed that father involvement in parenting has a significant relationship with the achievement of responsibility and academic achievement of school-age children. When fathers are emotionally and functionally present, children are more accustomed to completing tasks, following rules, and acting in accordance with their parents' and environment's expectations. This suggests that fathers who are involved in child-rearing from an early age can strengthen the gradual development of responsibility values. Research by Mulyadi (2016) also reveals that children with fathers who have a participatory and dialogical parenting style tend to demonstrate higher decision-making and initiative skills in their actions, including in obeying rules, taking care of personal belongings, and completing household chores without needing to be reminded. This aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which states that children imitate significant behaviors from key figures in their lives, including fathers.



Thus, the minimal role of fathers in childcare, as found in field interviews in Medan Tuntungan District, can be directly linked to the weak sense of responsibility in children. When fathers are not present as role models, children lose an important figure who should set an example of discipline, consistency, and ownership of tasks. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness among the community, especially in Batak culture, about the urgency of fathers' involvement in the parenting process so that values such as responsibility can be instilled fully from an early age.

METHOD

This study is a descriptive quantitative study to present data by analyzing the data obtained to obtain a clear picture. The research design uses a correlational method to determine whether there is a relationship between two or more variables. Data collection uses a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire filled out by fathers of children aged 5-6 years in Medan Tuntungan District. The questionnaire was designed in Google Form format and distributed to be filled out independently by respondents. The analysis technique used was correlation analysis with IBM SPSS 26. In this study, there were two variables, namely the independent variable of father involvement as X and the dependent variable of responsibility as Y.

This study was conducted in Medan Tuntungan District. Medan Tuntungan District was chosen because it is an urban area with a predominantly Batak ethnic group that still strongly holds traditional values, including in parenting patterns. Initial findings indicate low father involvement and high responsibility issues among young children in this area. Additionally, quantitative research on the role of fathers in this area is still very limited. The population in this study consisted of all fathers in the Medan Tuntungan subdistrict who had children aged 5-6 years, totaling 429. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, with the criteria for sample selection in this study being fathers who were employed, had children aged 5-6 years, were still married, and resided in the Medan Tuntungan subdistrict.

After calculating using the Slovin formula, this study required 96 samples with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 9% (0.09). Data collection was conducted using a research questionnaire in the form of a Google Form distributed online via social media. In this case, the researcher used a closed-ended questionnaire with Likert scale analysis. The measurement of the father involvement variable used an instrument developed by Mardhotillah (2018) based on Pleck's (2010) theory, which identifies five aspects of father involvement. These aspects include positive engagement activities, warmth and responsiveness, control, indirect care, and process responsibility. The instrument consists of 26 items. Item scoring is assisted by a Likert scale. Favorable questions are rated as very appropriate (SS) with a score of 4, appropriate (S) with a score of 3, inappropriate (TS) with a score of 2, and very inappropriate (STS) with a score of 1. The instrument grid for Father Involvement is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Father Involvement Instrument Matrix

N o.	Aspect	Indicator
1.	Positive engagement activities	a. Reading storybooks b. Playing puzzles c. Exercising together
2.	Warmth and responsiveness	a. Expressing love and pride to children b. Providing warmth with hugs c. Kissing children d. Giving children special nicknames
3.	Control	a. Asking about the activities carried out by the child on a daily basis b. Knowing the whereabouts of the child c. Establishing rules or boundaries for behavior that is acceptable and unacceptable for the child d. Providing a sense of security for the child
4.	Indirect care	a. Meeting the child's needs b. Providing something that suits the child's needs c. Introducing the social environment
5.	Process responsibility	a. Ensure that all of the child's needs are met b. Take the initiative and monitor the child's needs



- c. Take the initiative to ask the doctor about the child's condition when the child is sick

The child responsibility variable uses an instrument developed from the concept of early childhood responsibility by Clemes & Bean (2001) and modified by the researcher using three aspects, namely: 1) Assessing situations based on experience, 2) Awareness of parental expectations, 3) Making independent decisions to act appropriately. This questionnaire contains 44 favorable and unfavorable questions using a rating scale questionnaire, where each question is followed by a column indicating the level. Measurement uses the Likert scale model. Favorable questions are rated as very appropriate (SS) with a value of 4, appropriate (S) with a value of 3, inappropriate (TS) with a value of 2, and very inappropriate (STS) with a value of 1. The grid for the Father Involvement instrument can be seen in Table 1.

Table 2. Grid for the Child Responsibility Attitude Instrument

No.	Aspect	Indicator
1.	Assessing the situation	a. Not blaming others b. Admitting mistakes without making excuses c. Having several goals or interests to pursue d. Enjoying playing or working alone
2.	Awareness of parents' expectations	a. Performing tasks without always being told to do so b. Respecting and appreciating the rules that have been set c. Concentrating on complex tasks without feeling overly frustrated
3.	Making decisions independently	a. Explaining the reasons for their actions b. Making decisions that differ from those of others in the group c. Being consistent in what they say and do

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The validity test in this study refers to Priyanto's (2014:55) opinion that if the significance value shows a number <0.05 , then the statement item can be said to be valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test refers to the Cronbach Alpha coefficient > 0.6 , then the variable is declared reliable. In this study, the Father Involvement Scale and the Responsibility Attitude Scale were used, with Cronbach's Alpha values as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Explanation
Father involvement	0.887	19	Reliable
Responsibility	0.941	38	Reliable

Based on the data in Table 3, it can be seen that each instrument has a reliability value ≥ 0.7 . These results indicate that each instrument has passed the composite reliability test and is considered reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Respondent Data

This study uses the variables of father involvement and responsible attitudes in children aged 5-6 years. Data was obtained through questionnaires distributed to fathers of students aged 5-6 years via Google Forms. The presentation of data on the research variables provides an overview of the research respondents. Each research variable can be described as follows.



Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Research Sample

Variable	Category	Amount	Percentage (%)
Father's age	20-30 years old	33	36.67%
	30-40 years old	43	47.78%
	>40 years old	14	15.56%
Occupation	Office worker	11	12.22%
	Entrepreneur	8	8.89%
	WFH	5	5.56%
	Doctor	3	3.33%
	State-owned enterprise employee	9	10%
	Government supervisor	34	37.78%
	Teacher		
Length of time working outside the home	4-6 hours	32	33.33%
	6-8 hours	34	35.42%
	8-12 hours	24	26.67%
Number of children	1	39	43.33%
	2	33	36.67%
	>2	18	20%
Gender of children	Female	48	53.33%
	Male	42	46.67%
Age of children	5 years old	52	57.78%
	6 years old	38	42.22%

The demographic characteristics of the research sample in Table 4 show that 96 respondents initially participated. Six participants were excluded due to demographic data based on length of employment outside the city. Thus, the total number of participants in this study was 90 respondents because they did not meet the respondent criteria.

Table 5. Distribution of Father Involvement

Category	Amount	Percentage(%)
Low	11	12.22%
Medium	38	42.22%
High	41	45.56%
Total	90	100%

Based on Table 5, it is known that the distribution of father involvement in the low category is 12.22% or 11 respondents, the medium category is 42.22% or 38 respondents, and the high category is 45.56% or 41 respondents.

Table 6. Distribution of Children's Attitudes Towards Responsibility

Category	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	1	1.11%
Medium	18	20%
High	71	78.89%
Total	90	100%

Based on Table 6, it can be seen that the distribution of children's attitudes toward responsibility is as follows: 1.11% or 1 respondent in the low category, 20% or 18 respondents in the medium category, and 78.89% or 71 respondents in the high category.

Hypothesis Testing

The researchers conducted classical assumption tests, including normality tests, multicollinearity tests, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis. From the results of these assumption tests, the researchers found that all analysis results met the requirements, making it feasible to conduct hypothesis testing using simple linear regression techniques.



Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the decision-making guidelines in t-tests based on the significance value (sig.) of the SPSS results, namely (1) if the Sig value is < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted; and (2) conversely, if the Sig value is > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected.

Table 7. Partial Significance Test (T-test)

Variable	T-Value	Sig.
Responsibility	4.671	.000
Father involvement	10.244	.000

Based on Table 7, it can be seen that the calculated t-value (10.244) is less than the table t-value (1.987) or the Sig t-value (0.000) is less than (0.05). The t-value has a positive sign, indicating a relationship moving in the same direction, so H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means that if father involvement is high, children's responsibility will increase. Therefore, it can be concluded that H_a shows a significant influence between father involvement and children's responsibility at the age of 5-6 years in Medan Tuntungan District.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

	R Square
Father involvement	0,544

Table 8 shows that the R Square value of the father involvement variable is 0.544. This result explains that the percentage of father involvement is 54.4%. This means that the father involvement variable influences responsibility by 54.4%, while the remaining 45.6% is influenced by other variables.

The research results prove that there is an influence of father involvement on the responsibility of 5-6-year-old children in Medan Tuntungan District. The research results based on demographic data indicate that the number of fathers with high involvement aged between 30 and 40 years old is 43 people (47.78%). Conversely, fathers under the age of 27 tend to have lower levels of involvement. The research by Muslihatun & Santi (2022) explains that young fathers are psychologically not yet fully prepared to take on the role of caregiver, so their involvement in shaping their children's character is limited. This results in low indicators of children's responsibility, such as a lack of initiative in tidying up toys, not taking care of personal belongings, and reluctance to apologize when making mistakes. In line with the research conducted by Sari & Sunarti (2013), it is stated that men aged 27 who are ready to become fathers and ready to accept the presence of children will have a positive and optimal impact on their role as fathers. This proves that the older the father, the more interested he is in raising his children.

In another study, McMunn et al. (2017) found that good relationships between fathers and their children are more common among fathers aged 30 and above. Fathers over 30 are better able to participate in childcare compared to those under 30. Fathers who have a good relationship with their children provide benefits for their children, such as having good social relationships with their environment. This means that a father becomes a model for his children in shaping their character traits, such as responsibility, hard work, discipline, sacrifice, and readiness to face difficulties (Suhanti in Sibarani, 2019).

In addition to age, which influences a father's readiness for involvement, occupation is also a factor. Based on demographic data, the most common occupations (high category) among fathers involved in childcare are supervisors (20 individuals) and teachers (34 individuals). According to Benu and Killing et al. (2016:170), occupation can influence a father's involvement with his child, as it is related to the father's working hours, which are not too long and sufficiently flexible. In line with Hurlock's statement (in Benu, 2017) that the type of work can influence happiness, especially jobs that do not require excessive time, as fathers have the flexibility to manage their own time to interact with their children. Consistent with demographic data, fathers working outside the home for 6-8 hours, totaling 34 individuals, exhibit high levels of involvement. A father's presence provides a responsible example for children to follow. As Bandura (1977) noted, children learn more quickly by imitating or observing the behavior of those closest to them, namely their parents.

Previous research indicates that the lack of father involvement is due to fathers being busy working late into the night, combined with the habit of sitting in coffee shops until late at night, and then



immediately going to sleep, resulting in minimal communication with children. In other words, childcare is entirely entrusted to the mother, and fathers are less involved in childcare. Implicitly, fathers are more involved in meeting the family's needs and tarombo (traditional customs and genealogy) (Ariffananda & Satrio Wijaksono, 2023). This occurs because of the customs that bind the Batak tribe, where men have a higher status than women, childcare is entrusted to mothers, and fathers are busy providing for the family. On the other hand, mothers do not object, and this has become a long-standing tradition (Sibarani, 2019: 11).

Contrary to initial assumptions, this study shows that fathers are involved in childcare. Cultural shifts have made fathers aware that traditional childcare practices, which have been a characteristic of the Batak tribe for generations, must be discontinued. In line with Anhusadar's statement (2023:24), cultural and social changes have ultimately brought about changes in fathers' childcare patterns. In addition, there is a lot of education through various social media. This is evident from the demographic distribution based on occupation, which is dominated by the education sector, with 34 teachers (37.78%) and 20 education supervisors (22.22%). According to research by Guryan et al. (2018), fathers with higher education and bachelor's degrees spend approximately 74 minutes per day with their children, while less educated fathers average only 50 minutes per day. Fathers consider spending time with their children important to positively enhance cognitive abilities, foster responsibility, and improve academic performance. Fathers' involvement in childcare can be manifested through watching television, going for walks, discussing issues related to children with their wives, setting examples, and monitoring children's growth and development (Suciawati et al., 2024).

The shift in fathers' parenting styles from authoritarian to more participatory opens up opportunities for children to learn responsibility through real-life examples set by their fathers. Active father involvement, such as discussing, setting behavioral examples, and monitoring the child's development, serves as a direct means of instilling values of responsibility from an early age. Thus, the transformation of the father's role can change the face of parenting and strengthen the formation of the child's character, particularly in terms of independence and personal responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study found that father involvement has a significant influence on the responsibility attitudes of 5-6 year old children in Medan Tuntungan District, with a contribution of 54.4%. This was proven through a t-test which showed a t-value (10.244) or Sig. t 0.000 < 0.05, thus accepting the research hypothesis. Further analysis revealed that father involvement is influenced by age, occupation, length of employment, and number of children. Fathers with flexible work schedules tend to be more involved, while fathers with 1-2 children often assume that mothers can still manage childcare independently. The results of this study also indicate a shift in societal views in Medan Tuntungan, where fathers are beginning to recognize the importance of their role in childcare. Education about father involvement has proven to be one of the factors increasing this awareness. Further research could explore factors that have not yet maximally influenced father involvement, such as the role of work or the number of children. Additionally, programs are needed to support fathers in understanding and fulfilling their roles optimally, particularly in fostering children's sense of responsibility. Wider studies in other cultural contexts could also provide deeper insights into father involvement in childcare.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to express his deepest gratitude to the PGPAUD Study Program at Ahmad Dahlan University for its support and trust, which have been an important part of the researcher's personal development process, enabling this research to be completed. Thanks are also extended to all those involved, from the respondents, lecturers, colleagues, to all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the implementation of this research.

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