

## Exploration of the Influence of Fatherlessness on Student Academics through the Perspective of Guidance Counseling Teachers

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### Abstract

*The phenomenon of fatherlessness, characterized by the physical or psychological absence of a father, has become a relevant issue in Indonesian education. This study aims to analyze the impact of fatherlessness on students' academic performance, the challenges faced by school counselors in addressing such students, and strategies implemented through Islamic Counseling Guidance (BKI). The research employs a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and library research. The participants were experienced school counselors at SMK Negeri 04 Surakarta. The findings reveal that psychological fatherlessness significantly affects students' motivation and academic performance. School counselors face challenges such as lack of family support and resource limitations. BKI-based strategies, such as spiritual counseling and family relationship mediation, were found effective in improving the psychological state and academic outcomes of fatherless students.*

**Keywords:** *Fatherlessness, Academic Performance, Islamic Counseling Guidance*

### INTRODUCTION

The role of fathers in students' psychological development is often considered as something that plays an important role in the formation of character, motivation and academic achievement. However, recently, there has been a phenomenon of psychological father absence, which is hereinafter referred to as a phenomenon *fatherless*, is becoming an increasingly relevant issue in various countries, including Indonesia. Students who experience *fatherless* often face difficulties in building self-confidence, relationships with other people, and motivation to learn. Phenomenon This requires special attention, especially because of its relationship to students' academic performance at school.

Harmony in the family plays an important role in shaping children's academic achievement at school. Research by Sulastri (2009) shows that family harmony has a positive effect on student learning achievement, especially in Citizenship Education (PKN) subjects in junior high schools. This research highlights the importance of emotional support and stability in the family for students' academic development.

In addition, the absence of a father figure in a child's life, or fatherlessness, has a significant impact on the child's psychological development and behavior. Seira Valentina (2009) emphasized that a father, as a mediator in a child's life, must be able to provide the best solution to overcome the problems faced by the

child. However, in conditions of fatherlessness, children tend to face difficulties in adapting and building self-confidence. Sundari and Herdajani (2013) also noted that children who grow up without the presence of fathers often experience psychological problems such as feelings of anger, loneliness and low self-esteem, which continue into adulthood.

Slameto (2003) emphasized that the family is the first educational institution which is very important in shaping a child's character. Disharmonious families, especially those experiencing the absence of a father, can cause children to experience difficulties in learning and adapting to their social environment. This is in line with research by Afiatin (2001), which found that teenagers with low social adjustment tend to behave naughtily due to conflict in the family, especially with father figures.

According to Saif (2018), Indonesia is a country with a high level of fatherlessness, which affects many aspects of children's lives. This condition leads to a lack of love and attention from the father, which can increase the risk of behavioral disorders and psychological problems in children. Jarot Winarko and colleagues (2010) also stated that the father's lack of role in the family can cause children to experience difficulties in managing feelings and interacting with other people.

Faridah Idris (2013) also stated that the father's role in the family is very important, not only as a provider, but also as a source of love and protector. Children who grow up in unbalanced families, with minimal father roles, can experience social behavior disorders, psychological problems, and lack of self-confidence.

From an Islamic perspective, Munjiat (2017) suggests that the absence of a father figure can psychologically worsen a child's emotional condition, which ultimately affects their character and moral development. Fathers, as figures who transfer good values, have a very vital role in educating children so they grow into good and moral individuals.

Thus, various studies show that the absence of a father figure or fatherlessness has a deep impact on children's psychological, social and academic aspects. Therefore, it is important for families, especially mothers and society, to overcome this problem by providing adequate support for children who do not have a father figure who is present emotionally or physically.

This research offers a new approach by integrating the support of Islamic Guidance Counseling (BKI) in handling academic problems caused by the fatherless phenomenon experienced by students. The novelty of this research lies in the exploration of Islamic spiritual values that can be used as a mediating approach to improve students' psychological relationships with their fathers to improve academic performance at school.

There are three problem formulations discussed in this research, the first aims to find out how fatherlessness affects students' academic performance at school. The second discusses the challenges faced by guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with students affected by the fatherless phenomenon. Finally, this research also discusses the strategies of BK teachers in helping fatherless students solve problems that arise as a result of this, and how BKI helps improve the academic performance of fatherless students.

This research aims to explore the role of Guidance Counseling, especially Islamic Guidance Counseling in helping to deal with

students with academic performance problems at school due to the fatherless phenomenon.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a combination method, namely in-depth interviews and *library research*, to obtain comprehensive and valid data. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the meaning of each statement given by the informant in answering research questions. This method allows researchers to obtain rich and in-depth data regarding the influence of fatherlessness on students' academics, the challenges faced by Guidance Counseling (BK) teachers in dealing with students with this background, as well as the strategies implemented by schools to support them.

Library research was carried out to strengthen statements obtained through interviews with guidance and counseling teachers at SMK Negeri 04 Surakarta. This method involves analyzing literature, such as academic journals, books, and scientific publications, to ensure the validity and relevance of the data. The interview results were compared with academic references to support views regarding the impact of fatherlessness on students' motivation and academic achievement, the challenges faced in dealing with fatherless students, as well as the strategies implemented by guidance and counseling teachers in assisting them. This combined approach aims to produce analysis that is not only descriptive, but also has a strong theoretical basis.

The main instrument in this research is a list of interview questions designed to cover three main aspects. First, this research wants to understand the influence of fatherlessness on student academics, including learning motivation, academic grades, and student behavior in class. Second, this research explores the challenges faced by guidance and counseling teachers in providing counseling services to students from fatherless backgrounds. Third, this research seeks to explore school strategies in overcoming the problems faced by students with this condition.

The research subjects were guidance and counseling teachers at SMK Negeri 04 Surakarta

who had more than 10 years of experience in the field of school counseling. The guidance and counseling teacher was chosen as the main informant because he was considered to have in-depth insight and experience regarding student problems, including students from fatherless backgrounds. Informants were selected based on the criteria of their experience and willingness to participate in this research.

The research procedure begins with selecting informants who comply with predetermined criteria. After that, a list of interview questions was prepared with reference to the research objectives which included three main aspects. Interviews were conducted face to face with a duration of approximately 45-60 minutes for each session. During the interviews, data was recorded with the consent of the informants to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. The data obtained was then analyzed using a thematic approach to identify main patterns and themes relevant to the research objectives.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research uses triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various informants to obtain diverse perspectives. In addition, method triangulation is applied by combining interview results with other supporting data, such as school documents or counseling records. With this approach, it is hoped that research can make a significant contribution in understanding the influence of fatherlessness on students' academics as well as offering practical solutions for schools in dealing with this problem.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Guidance Counseling (BK) teacher at SMK Negeri 04 Surakarta identified that father absence can be divided into two types: physical absence, such as a father who has died, and psychological absence, such as a father who is still alive but is not present in his role and responsibilities as a father. father figure. Based on interviews, guidance and counseling teachers found that the impact of the physical absence of fathers tended to be less significant on students' academic performance. This is caused by the absence of excessive emotional pressure, so

students are better able to adapt. On the other hand, the absence of a father psychologically has a deeper impact because students often feel deprived of emotional support and experience confusion in finding their own identity.

The guidance counselor explained that students who are psychologically fatherless often show difficulty in focusing on studying, decreased exam results, and a tendency to choose the wrong social environment. This finding is supported by research by McLanahan et al. (2013), which states that children without a father present show lower academic performance than children who live with both parents. In addition, fatherless students often express an outlet for the absence of an authoritative figure at home through behavior that defies teachers and is unnecessarily bold.

The religiosity factor was also found to be very influential. Students who have a strong understanding of religion tend to be better able to manage stress and emotional pressure due to the absence of a father figure. This is in line with research by Mahoney et al. (2001), who suggest that involvement in religious activities can serve as a protective factor in dealing with family dysfunction.

The guidance counselor revealed that one of the main challenges in dealing with fatherless students is the students' closed attitude towards their family conditions. Students' unwillingness to share stories is caused by several reasons, such as shame, distrust of teachers, or fear of social stigma. Sunarti's research (2020) shows that this factor often hinders the counseling process because teachers do not receive enough information to provide effective intervention.

Another challenge is the generation gap between parents and children, which is often a source of misunderstanding. Counseling teachers note that differences in perspectives and expectations regarding children's behavior can worsen the condition of fatherless students, especially if communication between parents and children is ineffective. This is supported by research by Rahman (2019), which highlights that generation gaps can increase conflict within families, especially for children who need additional guidance due to the absence of a father figure.

Apart from that, guidance and counseling teachers also face challenges in building students' confidence to open up about their problems. Teachers must create a consistent and friendly approach, such as creating a relaxed atmosphere when talking to students, so that they feel heard without feeling judged. This strategy, although effective, requires quite a lot of time and patience.

According to the interview results, in dealing with students with academic problems at school due to the impact of fatherlessness, BK teachers have strategies that involve individual and collaborative aspects, assistance through counseling sessions, and calling parents to school to mediate with students. BK teachers routinely provide individual assistance through counseling sessions aimed at helping students manage emotions and face challenges that arise due to the absence of a father figure in their lives. As written in research by Rachmadani (2016), individual counseling is an effective method for exploring students' problems, because they can convey directly to the counselor about the problems they are facing.

The next strategy is a collaborative strategy that involves the role of parents in solving fatherless students' academic problems. In this strategy, parents are called to school without the child's knowledge to carry out indirect mediation between the child and parents as a curative measure for the problems faced by the child. In line with this, research proves that collaboration is a key element in the implementation of guidance and counseling (BK) in the educational environment (Huss, Bryant, and Mulet, 2008). As an integral part of the education system, guidance and counseling services cannot be run independently by guidance and counseling teachers, even though the program has been clearly designed and evaluated periodically (Desya, 2023). To achieve the goals formulated in the school guidance and counseling program, collaboration is an essential step. Apart from involving all academics in each educational unit, collaboration in guidance and counseling services also needs to be expanded to involve parents of students (Supriyanto, 2016).

Implementing these strategies has proven to be an important key in supporting students to

deal with the difficult situations they face. This also helps parents to be more open and understand their child's condition, so that they can then actively provide the attention their child needs in order to create a positive and supportive environment for students at home.

## **CONCLUSION**

Absence of a father figure or *fatherless* can affect students' academic performance, especially on psychological aspects. Students who experience *fatherlessness* psychologically face more significant challenges than students who physically lose their fathers, because they often feel deprived of emotional support and face confusion about their identity and self-perception. The guidance and counseling teacher at SMK N 04 Surakarta identified that effective treatment strategies require an individual and collaborative approach. Individual assistance through personal counseling has been proven to help students manage their emotions, while collaboration with parents allows the creation of mediation that supports solving student problems holistically.

However, the implementation of this strategy cannot be separated from challenges, such as students being closed off from the conditions of their families, lack of effective communication between parents and children, and generation gaps which can worsen the relationship between students and their parents. Therefore, an approach that is friendly, consistent and based on Islamic values is important to build student confidence and create a conducive environment.

Through these strategies, students can be helped to face their emotional challenges caused by fatherlessness, increase motivation, and return focus to academic achievement and improve their relationships. This approach not only has a positive impact on students, but also strengthens the relationship between students, parents and schools as a mutually supportive educational ecosystem.

## **SUGGESTION**

1. For parents  
Parents, especially fathers, are advised to be more present both physically and

psychologically in their children's lives. This presence is not only important as a provider of material needs, but also as a figure who supports the child's psychological and character development. Parents are also expected to create a harmonious family atmosphere to increase children's comfort in learning.

2. For teachers and schools  
Teachers, especially Guidance Counseling (BK) teachers, are expected to be more active in helping detect student problems related to family conditions. A friendly and empathetic approach helps students be more open about the problems they face. Apart from that, schools can provide support programs such as group counseling or parenting seminars for parents.
3. For governments or social institutions  
The government and social institutions are advised to organize outreach and training programs for parents regarding the importance of the role of fathers in forming children's character and psychology. Apart from that, there needs to be policy support that facilitates families in fatherless situations to get access to counseling or family guidance services.
4. For future researchers  
This research suggests that future researchers should further explore other factors that influence children's family development *fatherless*, such as social environment or level of religiosity. In addition, research with a quantitative approach using a wider sample can provide accurate generalization of results.
5. For the children of the family *fatherless*  
Children who experience the absence of a father figure are advised to seek support from a positive social environment, such as friends, teachers or certain communities. In addition, increasing piety and spirituality can help manage stress and emotional pressure due to family conditions.

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