

“Fatherman” On the Move: Social Transformation Strategy in Indonesian Family Education

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Abstract

“Fatherlessness” has long been a worldwide issue and social trend of our time. Research suggests that high-risk children in single-parent homes have nearly five times greater chance of developing mood disorders than those in co-parenting households. This article discusses “Fatherman”, an agency that voices the vital role of fathers in becoming psychological heroes for their children. The study aims to explore the strategy of the “Fatherman” agency in educating parents in Indonesia and to understand how “Fatherman”’s initiatives relate to gender roles and their broader impact on Indonesian society. This study employed a qualitative research approach by utilizing the content analysis method on several “Fatherman” social media accounts and books. The findings of this study revealed that the strategy adopted by the founders of the “Fatherman” account, namely Ustadz Bendri Jaisyurrahman and Ayah Irwan Rinaldi, makes fathers aware of their important role in the domestic sphere. This can be seen from the testimonials of online course participants, followers of the “Fatherman” account, and readers of the “Fatherman” books. Furthermore, the understanding of fatherhood has changed over time. Fatherhood has always been a multifaceted concept, from just being a provider (*nafaqah*) to becoming a role model for children, giving marital support, and nurturing. Based on a gender perspective, “Fatherman” still seems ambiguous and semi-patriarchal. The fundamental barrier is that masculinity, as currently constructed, becomes a tension for men to be fully involved in nurturing and household work. While “Fatherman” aims to encourage fathers to actively engage in parenting, they advertently reinforce gender superiority or perpetuate traditional gender roles. The social transformation that “Fatherman” offers is a changing perception of a father’s role in nurturing. Certainly, there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to the fatherlessness crisis in Indonesia today. However, “Fatherman” agency will be one of the leading voices in providing an understanding of the father’s role.

Keywords: “Fatherman”, social transformation, children, Indonesian family

Introduction

Rhenald Kasali said that the deterioration of the behavior of young people today is the result of the failure of families to “produce” strong children (Kasali, 2017). John Defrain and Asay have studied the characteristics of strong families, one of which is the ability to manage stress and times of crisis effectively (Defrain & Asay, 2014). Today our nation suffers from sickness of the soul because our families are weak. Weak in their knowledge of God, weak in their convictions about God, weak in their experience of God, and weak in their understanding of how to love one another (Rainey, 2019).

This is closely related to parenting; more specifically to the role of the father (Jaisyurrahman, 2022). The twentieth century has been characterized by four important social trends that have fundamentally changed the social-cultural context in which children develop: women’s increased labor force participation; increased father absence; increased father involvement; and increased cultural diversity (Cabrera et al., 2000). These changes have led to different family structures as well as to different expectations and beliefs about the role of fathers.

Unfortunately, not all children will grow up having meaningful contact with their fathers (Barajas, 2011). These children experience a symptom called “*father hunger*” or hunger for a father figure (Rainey, 2019). The phenomenon of “*father hunger*” is often also referred to as “*fatherless*” (Ashari, 2018), “*father absence*” (Webster et al., 2014), or “*father loss*” (Osmond, 2010). Fatherlessness is generally defined as a father figure’s absence in life because of death or bad relationships and communication between children and father (Wibiharto et al., 2021). Bradley explains that fatherlessness is the father’s physical, emotional, and spiritual absence from the child’s life. If children have a father figure in their life, they will feel that their father can find out what they feel and think, children can communicate with their father in many ways and can

ask for advice and help from their father. If children do not experience the things mentioned, it can be concluded that they are in a fatherless condition (Bradley, 2016). Qualitative characteristics of father-child interactions such as warmth, affection, sensitivity, and participation during specific engagements with children are important aspects of father involvement as well (Cabrera et al., 2000).

Based on several concepts about fatherlessness above, this research will focus on families with children with a psychologically absent father, whether in an intact marriage or one that has been annulled. In this research, the meaning of fatherless does not only refer to the biological father and stepfather but also to men in the family who can replace the father figure, such as grandfather or uncle.

“Fatherlessness” has long been a worldwide issue. Yulinda Ashari (Ashari, 2018), quoting from the official website www.cyep.org, states that “*fatherless*” has occurred in several countries, such as America, Sweden, the UK, Canada, Australia, Norway, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Cameroon, Africa, Netherlands, and Finland. Most cases in Western countries are related to unmarried fathers and mothers, while in Indonesia it is related to married fathers and mothers (Ashari, 2018).

Responding to this concern, an Islamic parenting practitioner, Bendri Jaisyurrahman along with three colleagues Irwan Rinaldi, a father practitioner; Hilman Al Madani, a psychologist; and Nur Firdaus, a child and adolescent counselor; collaborated to create a joint learning forum called “Fatherman”, and which is an agency that promotes the vital role of fathers to be a psychological hero to their children and at the same time a good partner to their wives. The agency is mostly engaged in social media such as Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp and Zoom. They also collaborated in writing books about fatherhood, one of which was entitled “*Fatherman*” 1; *Ayah yang dirindukan* by Bendri Jaisyurrahman (Jaisyurrahman, 2022).

One important thing to discuss further regarding the concept of fatherhood offered by "*Fatherman*" is regarding the role of father and mother in the household. On the one hand, "*Fatherman*" makes fathers aware of being involved in parenting, but on the other hand, "*Fatherman*" also domesticates the role of the mother (Jaisyurrahman, 2021). It means that recalibration toward equality, however, has not taken place. So, while the ideal of care has changed, the concept of equality has shifted only slightly. One of the reasons for this asymmetric pattern, Nancy E. Dowd suggested, lies in the construction of masculinities (Dowd, 2012). Because the discussion of fatherhood is closely related to gender equality, this research will also analyze "*Fatherman*" from a gender perspective.

So much has been written about fathering or fatherhood, from the early twentieth century (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Rohner, 1998; Verwoerd, 1996) up to the twenty-first century (Connell, 2000; Cabrera et al., 2000; Ward et al., 2021). However, the discussion is still on fatherhood in general, not on agency or movement. Therefore, this study will explore the strategy of the "*Fatherman*" agency in educating parents in Indonesia, especially regarding the role of fathers in the social transformation of Indonesian families and their influence on changes in the thoughts and behavior of fathers who participate in the "*Fatherman*" movement.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach. This paper has no participants because it is based on the library research method and also used digital library research because some of the sources are from digital data. In the analysis phase, this research will use the method of content analysis to determine the tendency of the content of the communication. Krippendorff says that content analysis is a research

technique for making replicable and valid conclusions from texts (or other meaningful material) to the context of their use (Krippendorff, 2019). As a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases the researcher’s understanding of a particular phenomenon, or informs practical action (Krippendorff, 2019). This research technique should produce findings that can be replicated. The researchers work at different points in time and perhaps in different circumstances should obtain the same results when applying the same technique to the same data. In addition, it must also produce valid results, in the sense that the research is open to scrutiny and the resulting claims can be enforced on the independently available evidence (Krippendorff, 2004).

The variety of content analysis categories employed in this research is linguistic representations (Krippendorff, 2019). To analyze texts as representations is to analyze the conceptual structure that a text invokes in particular readers. Written text is not just a collection of words, rather it is sequenced discourse, a network of narratives that can be read variously. Qualitative content analysts recognize the need to respond to texts as connected discourse and seek to rearticulate relevant portions of texts (Krippendorff, 2019). For example, critical discourse analysts offer accounts of the roles of language, language use, and (in)coherences and of the communicative uses of texts in the (re)production of dominance and inequalities in society (van Dijk, 2008). The analysis would also recognize that meanings change over time and would place every assertion in the context of previous assertions. A content analysis of representations would answer questions of interest that are not literally found in the text (Krippendorff, 2019).

“*Fatherman*” offers a discourse about the father and mother’s involvement in nurturing, so, in addition, this research employed a gender perspective in analyzing the gender relations built by the “*Fatherman*”’s agency. In the traditional stereotype, a father is only a provider, not a

nurturer, (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Johansson, 2011; Silverstein, 1996), so he does not need to be involved in nurturing. Meanwhile, from the perspective of gender equality, Susan Moller Okin and Connel have said that family must be seen as a gender-neutral relationship (Okin, 1987; Connell, 2000). Therefore, both father and mother have the same role, in both providing and nurturing. Through a gender perspective, this paper will explore; a) What is the family concept according to “*Fatherman*”? and b) What are the father’s and mother’s roles in the gender equality concept developed by “*Fatherman*”?

The data for this research was collected through “*Fatherman*”’s social media accounts; namely, *Instagram*, *Telegram*, and *Website*. Also adding the books published by “*Fatherman*”; namely, “*Fatherman*” 1; *Ayah yang dirindukan* (book), “*Fatherman*” 2; *Suara hati bunda untuk ayah* (e-book), *60 Rahasia ayah hebat* (pocket book), *Agar ayah enggak masuk neraka* by Bendri Jaisyurrahman and Irwan Rinaldi, and *Parentime* by Hilman Al Madani. This study will also analyze the content of online courses organized by the “*Fatherman*” agency through *Zoom* meetings. The object of the research is to examine materials related to the role and involvement of fathers in marriage and parenting. Data analysis techniques include discourse analysis and hermeneutic analysis.

Results and Discussion

An Overview of “*Fatherman*” Agency

“*Fatherman*” is an agency initiated by Bendri Jaisyurrahman and his three colleagues. They promote the vital role of fathers to be a psychological hero to their children and at the same time be a good partner to their wives. “*Father is not always present at all times, but always at the right time*”, is the tagline (slogan) of the “*Fatherman*”. The book author of *Fatherman 1*, who is often called Ustadz Bendri through

his book, describes the background of his seriousness in inspiring Indonesian families about the role of fathers in the family. The nickname “*Fatherman*” comes from two words, namely “father” and “man”. This nickname was chosen for its similarity to hero characters in Hollywood films, such as Superman, Batman, Spiderman, and others. This means, like heroes who are not present all the time, fathers who rarely see their spouse and children are expected to be present at the right time when needed. This is the meaning behind the tagline “*Fatherman*” above (Jaisyurrahman, 2022).

This agency does not create “exclusive new heroes” like heroes in movies but refers to any men, especially married ones, who feel important and responsible for practicing the sciences of marriage and dedicate themselves to direct parenting while being busy making a living or preaching. Through its materials, “*Fatherman*” is expected to be a forum for Indonesian parents to improve, and become growing partners in the family, and a teacher who guides fathers to be physically and psychologically present for their children.

The concept of “*Fatherman*” highlights society’s gendered expectations of fathers. Traditionally, fathers have been assigned the role of providers and protectors, much like superheroes. This role often emphasizes being a man who steps in during emergencies or important times, rather than being consistently involved in caregiving and nurturing roles. This reinforces the stereotypical division of labor between men and women, where men are expected to excel in public and heroic domains, while women are primarily responsible for domestic and caregiving duties.

Comparing fathers to superheroes like Superman, Batman, and Spiderman underscores the idea that men should embody extraordinary qualities and talents (Volintine, 2016). This idealization can be harmful as it places unrealistic pressure on men to be strong, invulnerable and

always ready to save the day. It neglects the vulnerability, emotions and humanity of fathers, who, like all individuals, have their limitations and moments of weakness. The concept of “*Fatherman*” can inadvertently perpetuate traditional gender norms by reinforcing the idea that men’s primary role is outside the home, while women’s primary role is within it. This perspective can hinder progress toward achieving gender equality by discouraging men from taking on active caregiving roles and sharing domestic responsibilities.

To become a “*Fatherman*”, Ustadz Bendri said that a father must understand and “wear” seven hats according to the situation; namely, the hat of counselor, the hat of teacher, the hat of nurturer, the hat of motivator, the hat of entertainer, the hat of the distributor (promoter), and the hat of the donor (provider), (Jaisyurrahman, 2022). (1) “The hat of counselor” refers to the role of the father as a counselor who understands the children’s feelings; ready to listen to children’s complaints while waiting for the right moment to give advice. Fathers must have the endurance to listen to their children's feelings. There are two times when the father is required to be present as a counselor for the child, namely: a) When the child is sad; and b) When the child is sick. These two times are considered effective for telling stories, giving advice, and teaching wisdom (Jaisyurrahman, 2022);

(2) “The hat of teacher” means that the father must be the first source of knowledge for the children. A father who knows a lot will be more valuable in front of the child. When a father has a lot of knowledge, information, or insight, then the father will be a support for the child to learn anything. Even for something private (such as sexual education), he will get the right and wise information from his father. This can also prevent children from getting information from untrusted sources; (3) “the hat of nurturer” refers to the role of fathers in educating and nurturing children based on three energies; namely sincerity (the desire

to continue to learn parenting patterns), perseverance (intensity in parenting), and patience (composure in undergoing each child care process);

(4) “The hat of motivator” is like a “handphone charger”; fathers must be the main source of energy for children based on two provisions; namely, credibility (worthy of being an example) and momentum (understanding the golden moment to motivate); (5) “The hat of entertainer” refers to where the father becomes the entertainment center for the children. The point is that fathers can regulate the rhythm of their children’s lives so that they are dynamic and not bored. This role can start with simple things, such as giving a memorable greeting to the child. So, he was excited to tell his father about his experiences. One of the characteristics of a child being impressed by his father or parents can be seen in the child's enthusiasm for sharing stories with his parents;

(6) “The hat of distributor (promoter)” refers to the father’s ability to promote children’s strengths as a strategy to bind children’s hearts. This skill also shows that fathers know their children’s development, strengths, and weaknesses well; (7) “the hat of donor (provider)” indicates a father who likes to give money or gifts as needed, is not stingy, and understands wisely the right time to give. This role is needed as a way to conquer a child's heart. There are several provisions for giving money or gifts to children, namely: a) It is recommended to give often, even if it is only a little; b) Vary the gifts so that children don't get bored; c) Occasionally increase the value of gifts according to the child's dreams (Jaisyurrahman, 2022). These seven role caps are flexible or can be used interchangeably as needed.

Assigning these diverse roles to father challenges gender stereotypes that restrict men to certain roles within the family unit. It recognizes that fathers are capable of providing emotional support (counselor), imparting knowledge (teacher), offering affection and care

(nurturer), and motivating and inspiring their children (motivator). This breaks down the binary notion of masculinity that has limited men's emotional expression and involvement in nurturing roles. From a feminist perspective, the concept of the "*Fatherman*" can be seen as a step toward gender equality within the family. It acknowledges that both parents, regardless of gender, can and should share responsibilities in raising their children. This shared responsibility is a key aspect of achieving gender equality and promoting a more balanced division of labor in caregiving and household duties.

Many parents join and interact on several "*Fatherman*" social media accounts, such as *Instagram*, *Telegram*, *YouTube*, and *Zoom*. The *Instagram* account has been around since July 2019 with more than 81 thousand followers. Whereas *Telegram* has been in use since February 2022, currently with 41,944 followers. The *YouTube* account has been around since February 5, 2017, with more than 17 thousand followers and 270 videos. The content on the *Telegram* account is usually also on the *Instagram* account. Content is in the form of images and videos, accompanied by some additional information or affirmation in the form of writing (captions) under the image or video. The "*Fatherman*" team started with four men, namely Bendri Jaisyurrahman, Irwan Rinaldi, Hilman Al Madani, and Nur Firdaus. Despite their different backgrounds, they have something in common, namely in the field of childcare.

The use of social media platforms by parents to engage with "*Fatherman*" suggests the creation of a virtual community centered around this concept. Analyzing the types of interactions, discussions and content shared on these platforms can provide insights into the nature of this community. Are parents seeking advice, sharing personal experiences, or engaging in broader discussions related to fatherhood and parenting? Understanding the discourse within this community is crucial for assessing its impact and influence. It's important to examine

whether “*Fatherman*” promotes positive and inclusive messages about parenting, challenges traditional gender roles, or reinforces certain stereotypes.

The “Fatherman” Strategy in Educating the Indonesian Family

There are several strategies carried out by the “*Fatherman*” team in educating Indonesian families, including book writing, virtual parenting classes, and *Instagram* content. We can unpack the nuances of these strategies, exploring issues of authority, accessibility, impact, and the construction of parenting discourse in the Indonesian context. An understanding of how these strategies intersect and influence societal perceptions of parenting is crucial for a comprehensive analysis.

As mentioned earlier, “*Fatherman*” has published five books, four in print and one in digital form (e-book). The best-selling book among the four books is the book entitled *Fatherman 1* by Ustad Bendri Jaisyurrahman. It has now reached its sixth printing since it was first published in 2019. This book emphasizes the role of authorship and authority within the “*Fatherman*” team. This implies that individuals like Ustad Bendri are considered authoritative figures in the field of parenting and fatherhood education.

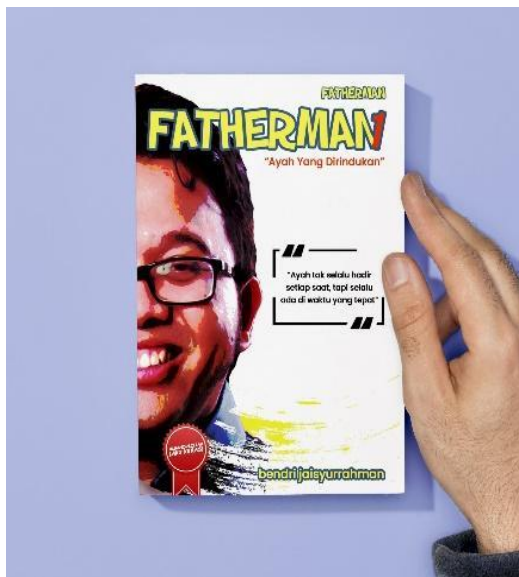


Figure 1. Book cover of *Fatherman 1*

This book received positive appreciation from the community. The language is light, humorous, and full of meaning. Readers are invited to reflect uniquely. Many illustrations in the book are about the attitude and character of a “*Fatherman*” father. Some testimonials from readers of this book can be seen as follows;



Figure 2 Book reader testimonials of “*Fatherman*” 1

In addition to the *Fatherman 1* book, there are also several other father-related books that “*Fatherman*” has published, namely;

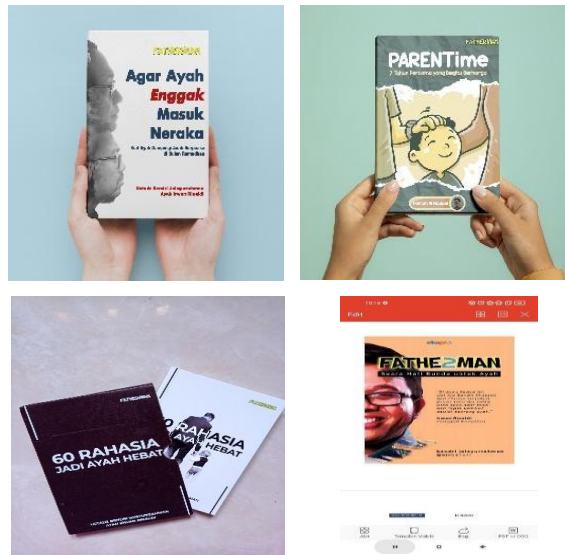


Figure 3. Other “*Fatherman*” books. Especially the book “*Fatherman*” 2 published in digital form (e-book)

The distinction between print and digital media reflects a recognition of changing reading habits and preferences in modern society. This strategy is expected to be a way of disseminating parenting knowledge with broader accessibility.

As for the study of Virtual Parenting (e-course), so far, they have released four paid virtual courses, namely; 1) The Art of Educating Boys (347.000 IDR), 2) The Art of Educating Girls (347.000 IDR), 3) Parenting Communications (447.000 IDR), and 4) Couples Conflict Management (347.000 IDR). Parents’ interest in participating in this series of e-courses can be said to be quite high. Participants were enthusiastic and willing to spend money to be able to take part in the entire series of e-courses, even one of the e-course alumni mentioned that he had attended all four of the “*Fatherman*” e-courses. If it is calculated, then the estimated funds that he has spent are 1.448.000 IDR. Other alumni also

shared about the change in her husband's attitude since attending the "Fatherman" class. Currently, her husband prefers to play with his children after work rather than playing games on his handphone.



Figure 4 Testimonials from the "Fatherman" e-course participants.

The "Fatherman" team does not only provide paid e-courses. They also often organize free webinars through the *Zoom* application. The enthusiasm of the participants was quite high, they did not want to miss this free webinar. For participants who missed, they will not get a recorded webinar, except from the "Fatherman" team who shared it on the "Fatherman" *YouTube* account. However, this is very rarely done. The author assumes that participants are interested in taking paid e-courses because free webinar recordings are usually used as bonus material when participating in one or a series of paid "Fatherman" e-courses.

Another effort made by the "Fatherman" team is to provide parenting materials through the *@Fatherman.id*, the name of "Fatherman" *Instagram* account. The material is quite varied, ranging from wedding chats, partner characters, parenting stages, how to deal with adolescents, tricks to become a great father or husband, and so on. The "Fatherman" team continues to carry out collaborative activities aimed at initiating and supporting Indonesian parents, especially Muslim

and middle-class fathers. Material fatherhood is considered the starting point of the weakness of the family all over the world today, which is often overlooked. Nurturing or childcare is often addressed to the mother (East et al., 2006). Therefore, “*Fatherman*” took the initiative to fill this gap so that the parenting role could be carried out in a balanced way by both mother and father. They believe that parenting requires the word “agreement” between father and mother (Al Madani, 2022). This paper will analyze the main messages conveyed by the “*Fatherman*” team through *Instagram*, books, and online studies.

By utilizing multiple strategies, they recognize the diversity in learning preferences and accessibility and cater to a broader audience. It highlights the multifaceted strategies employed by the “*Fatherman*” team in educating Indonesian families about parenting and fatherhood.

Closer to Netizens Through Instagram and Books

The “*Fatherman*” discourse as a principal (read, the main mover) carried by “*Fatherman*”, is not only at the surface level or introduction, but is integrated in all material they provide. Following are the results of the analysis of the top eighteen posts and sequential content quoted from the *Instagram* account “*Fatherman*”, from April 13, 2022, to August 30, 2022. The selection of *Instagram* accounts is the main object of analysis in the content analysis method because it is more systematic and intensive than “*Fatherman*”’s other social media accounts. In addition, comments and various responses from netizens (citizens) and account owners are also more transparent, so that the validity of the data is easier to track.

| No. | Post Time | Content Form | Content Main Idea | Content's Main Goals | Recommendations |
|-----|-----------------|------------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 1 | June 6, 2022 | E-flyer | The Art of Educating Girls | Father and Mother | Take the "Fatherman" Online Course |
| 2 | June 28, 2022 | Book Buyer Testimonial | "Fatherman"'s thanks to book readers. | Father and Mother | Buy "Fatherman" book |
| 3 | April 13, 2022 | E-flyer | Raising Our Children; Full discussion of how parenting communication in Islam | Father and Mother | Take the "Fatherman" Online Course |
| 4 | August 30, 2022 | Picture and text | Book Buyer Testimonials <i>Parentime</i> and <i>60 Rahasia Ayah Hebat</i> | Father and Mother | Buy "Fatherman" book |
| 5 | August 29, 2022 | Picture and text | Inner Livelihood; Husband Must Know! | Husband/Father | Take a Free Webinar on "Mom's Voice for Dad". |
| 6 | August 29, 2022 | Text | Book Buyer Testimonials "Fatherman" 1 | Father and Mother | Gift or buy <i>Fatherman 1</i> book for the husband |
| 7 | August 28, 2022 | E-flyer | Mother's Conscience for Dad; Tips for a husband to make his wife happy | Husband/Father | Take a Free Webinar on "Mom's Voice for Dad". |
| 8 | August 28, 2022 | Picture and text | Wife helps tyrannical husband | Wife for Husband | Helps tyrannical partner |
| 9 | August 28, 2022 | Video (Reels) | Don't Let Mother Fight Alone | Father | Take a Free Webinar on "Mom's Voice for Dad". |
| 10 | August 27, 2022 | Picture and text | Silence "for a while" is a good habit for husbands during a conflict. | Husband-Father | Take a moment of silence when there is conflict with your partner. |
| 11 | August 27, 2022 | Video (Reels) | Don't Let Mother Fight Alone | Father | Take a Free Webinar on "Mom's Voice for Dad". |

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| 12 | August 26, 2022 | Picture and text | News about a mother who killed her three biological children. | Father | Take a Free Webinar on “Mom’s Voice for Dad”. |
| 13 | August 25, 2022 | E-flyer | Mother’s Voice for Father | Father and Mother | Take a Free Webinar on “Mom’s Voice for Dad”. |
| 14 | August 25, 2022 | Text | Ustadz Bendri’s comments about a follower’s question regarding parenting errors. | Father and Mother | Taubat and study about parenting. |
| 15 | August 24, 2022 | Text | Testimonials from “Fatherman” e-course alumni | Father | Take the “Fatherman” Online Course |
| 16 | August 24, 2022 | Picture and text | Three Special Bonuses for “Fatherman” e-course registrants | Father and Mother | Take the “Fatherman” Online Course |
| 17 | August 24, 2022 | Text | Reminder For Married Couples | Husband and Wife | Keep attachment with a partner |
| 18 | August 23, 2022 | E-flyer | Variety of “Fatherman” e-courses as needed | Father and Mother | Take the “Fatherman” Online Course |

Table 1 Eighteen Top @Fatherman.id Instagram Contents

The *Instagram* content analyzed above is based on the layout in the main view of the “Fatherman” *Instagram* account. It is not completely in chronological order because three areas of content will always be (embedded) at the top of the list. The author assumes that these three contents are the main topics of “Fatherman” that readers will not miss, whenever they open this account.

Based on observations of the eighteen contents, it can be concluded that there is some information that is delivered repetitively, such as information on free online studies with the theme “The voice of the mother’s heart for father”. If you observe this repetitive content, it will further emphasize that this online study is aimed at husbands or fathers,

to understand the hopes and needs of their wives or mothers in living a household life. On the other hand, this online study aims to make the wife understand what is going on inside her so that she is wiser in conveying it to her husband.

In addition to the content on *Instagram*, “*Fatherman*” also provides many reviews through the books mentioned at the beginning of this article. Following are the results of the analysis of five “*Fatherman*” books, both printed and digital versions;

| No. | Book Title | Author | Main Point | Main Reader Target |
|-----|--|--|--|--------------------|
| 1. | <i>“Fatherman” 1; Ayah yang dirindukan</i> | Bendri Jaisyurrahman | Father’s role and involvement in parenting | Husband or Father |
| 2. | <i>“Fatherman” 2; Suara hati bunda untuk ayah (e-book)</i> | Bendri Jaisyurrahman | Tips for understanding the conscience of a wife and children. | Husband or Father |
| 3. | <i>Parentime; 7 Tahun pertama yang begitu berharga</i> | Hilman Al Madani | The urgency of educating children appropriately in the first seven years of age. | Father and Mother |
| 4. | <i>60 Rahasia ayah hebat</i> | Bendri Jaisyurrahman dan Irwan Rinaldi | 60 tips to be a great and missed dad. | Husband or Father |
| 5. | <i>Agar ayah enggak masuk neraka; kiat ayah dampingi anak berpuasa di bulan Ramadhan</i> | Bendri Jaisyurrahman dan Irwan Rinaldi | Ramadhan is a golden time to strengthen the relationship between father and son. Equipped with an implementation worksheet for fathers educating their children in the month of Ramadan. | Husband or Father |

Table 2 “*Fatherman*” Books Content

The five books above have been distributed in Indonesia. Through the *Fatherman.id* website, it was conveyed that the first book had been printed six times and was read by more than 24,000 people. The third book has been printed twice and read by more than 3,000 people. This data shows that the “*Fatherman*” concept has received a positive and enthusiastic response from the public.

“*Fatherman*” books are in great demand and recommended by notable people. One of the testimonials from a reader of the book “*Agar ayah enggak masuk neraka*” said:

Ini buku langka. Baru kali ini ketemu buku parenting yang fokus untuk Ayah, lengkap dengan worksheet yang implementatif. Diawali dengan cerita kisah terbaik di al-Quran tentang Nabi Yusuf as. Cara bertuturnya ringan dan kekinian namun tetap mendalam khas penyampaian Ajo Bendri dan Ayah Irwan. Kado terbaik untuk para ayah dan calon ayah. Rona Mentari. @mentarirona, Professional Storyteller (Jaisyurrahman & Rinaldi, 2022).

This is a rare book. This is the first time I've come across a parenting book that focuses on fathers, complete with implementable worksheets. Starting with the best story in the al-Qur'an about the Prophet Yusuf. as. His way of speaking is light and contemporary but still deep, typical of Ajo Bendri's and Irwan's father's delivery. The best gift for fathers and fathers-to-be. Rona Mentari. @mentarirona, Professional Storyteller (Jaisyurrahman & Rinaldi, 2022).

Discussions in “*Fatherman*” books place the father or husband as the main figure. Father figures, especially in Indonesia, are often portrayed as busy, tired of making a living, busy with many jobs, and having limited time to raise children. As a result, they tend to be negligent

with parenting. Couple this with the condition of today's mothers who often attend parenting seminars (parenting strategies), but find their husbands or fathers don't care about parenting. In the end, husband and wife often do not have the same frequency when discussing children and intense conflicts arise between them.

This is where the pertinent points are taken by the "*Fatherman*" team. They try to overcome these problems by providing education, tips, and concrete steps to fathers to optimally raise children and understand their partners. It can be seen at the end of "*Fatherman*" 2, Ustadz Bendri concluded two main points; namely; first, a father is expected to be a husband and father who is willing to evaluate themselves so that parenting goals are achieved. Second, a mother conveys everything to her husband in a good way. These two conclusions prove that in the nurturing process, "*Fatherman*" hopes for a mutual relationship between husband and wife, such as learning from each other, understanding each other, and practicing each other's parenting strategies.

One interesting thing from the "*Fatherman*" material in online courses is quotes from an in-depth analysis of verses of the Qur'an, hadith, Sirah Nabawiyah, and Sirah of the Prophet's Companions compared to discussions in "*Fatherman*" books; for example, messages from the story of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Ismail, Prophet Adam, Prophet Yusuf, Prophet Ishaq, Pharaoh's wife and other verses from the Qur'an. Other examples can be seen in the book *Fatherman 2* when discussing parenting evaluation. Ustad Bendri gives examples of stories from the time of the prophet Ya'qub, Sulaiman bin Abdul Malik, Walid bin Abdul Malik, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz (Jaisyurrahman, 2021).

When quoting verses from the Qur'an, it is usually not accompanied by the interpretation or words of certain scholars. "*Fatherman*" speakers tend to take subjective interpretations of the meaning of the verse and adjust them to the title of the discussion. For example, in an

online study entitled “*Ketika pasangan tak sesuai harapan*”, Ustadz Bendri cites surah al-Baqarah verse 34 and surah al-A’raf verse 12, about Allah’s command to prostrate to Prophet Adam. Satan refused to prostrate because he was disappointed with the creation of the Prophet Adam. These verses are used as the basis that partners are from the human class and have shortcomings. According to Ustadz Bendri, this story teaches about “disappointed management”. So, everyone does not need to set too high expectations for their partner. In concluding this concept, Ustadz Bendri does not quote any interpretation.

“Fatherman” and Co-Parenting

Many studies discuss the role of mothers as single parents, without looking at the father’s side (East et al., 2006). It is well documented that children from single-parent families are usually cared for by women. This condition results in many environmental problems, poorer academic achievement, engaging in early sexual activity, poorer psychological health, and experiencing greater difficulties in life, compared to children from dyadic families (raised by father and mother). (Hetherington et al., 1992).

Of the many articles that talk about parenting, mothers are often the ones who are blamed when things go wrong with their children (D. Jackson & Mannix, 2004). It is clear, however, that a father’s absence has an impact on children’s health and well-being and may have far-reaching implications for adolescence. The absence of a father appears to contribute significantly to life-adversity factors, including maladaptive behavior, poor academic achievement, low self-identity, and risky behaviors, including sexual intercourse and drug use (East et al., 2006). The absence of a father also affects the rate of menstruation and early pregnancy compared to those raised by fathers and mothers (Ellis et al., 2003; Tither & Ellis, 2008). Research has also shown that the father's

absence is an independent variable and predictor of psychological well-being that is detrimental and complicates the developmental life of children and adolescents (East et al., 2006).

According to East and others, the above studies fail to articulate clearly the importance of paternal love; why and how fathers play a role in childhood development and psychological health; and why paternal absence may lead to possible adverse behavioral disorders (East et al., 2006). The “*Fatherman*” team is well aware that these shortcomings must be addressed. The role and support of the father are quite significant to maternal health, and this will affect the mother’s behavior towards the child (Li & Meier, 2017; Rohner, 1998). Often children become an outlet for a stressed mother’s soul without the support of her husband. According to *DeskJabar.com*’s coverage, quoted by the *Instagram* account “*Fatherman*”, the news of a mother killing her three biological children is proof that a father’s involvement has a big impact on the family. For this reason, they held a free webinar entitled “*Suara hati bunda untuk ayah*” on August 29, 2022.

A mother might rarely talk to the father because his body language is not friendly. Consequently, when breastfeeding a child while restless, she is unable to listen to the child’s voice and is impatient when talking because of her uncontrolled emotions. As a result, the child can only get “emotional trash” from the mother. The child finally prefers to avoid and stay away from the mother. This is the first disaster in parenting when the mother is no longer missed by her baby. So, the father’s obligatory duty as the principal is to provide time and space every day for mothers to talk to nourish the mother’s soul and listen to her complaints (Jaisyurrahman, 2021).

The “*Fatherman*” team is fully aware of the importance of the love, role, and involvement of fathers in the family. This is different from the focus of parenting materials in general, which focus more on the mother’s

side. “*Fatherman*” discusses everything from the husband or father figure to the wife or mother, and the children. “*Fatherman*” also emphasizes the importance of co-parenting (both father and mother roles). The presence of “*Fatherman*”’s agency is also an answer to the anxiety demonstrated in the research above about the parenting perspective, which blames the mother for being a single parent.

“Fatherman”, Gender Perspective, and Social Transformation

From the discussion above, several critical analyses can be carried out on the concept of the family from the “*Fatherman*” perspective, including first, the father and mother in “*Fatherman*”’s perspective; second, “*Fatherman*”’s content from the gender perspective; and third, the social transformation of “*Fatherman*”’s perspective.

First, father and mother in “Fatherman”’s perspective. From “*Fatherman*”’s perspective, the father is like a headmaster and the mother is like a school. Ustadz Bendri said:

Ibu madrasah pertama seorang anak, tapi ayah adalah kepala sekolahnya..., Sayangnya, saat ini, banyak madrasah yang tak punya kepala sekolah. Jadinya, ya, seperti madrasah illegal, mendidik anak secara ugal-ugalan. Ayah, yang seharusnya menjalankan tugas sebagai kepala sekolah, tidak paham perannya. Jadilah ibu mengurus anak seorang diri tanpa orientasi, arahan, dan bimbingan kepala sekolah. (Jaisyurrahman, 2021)

The mother is the first madrasah for a child, but the father is the headmaster. Unfortunately, nowadays, many madrasahs do not have a headmaster. So, yes, it’s like an illegal madrasah, educating children recklessly. The father, who is supposed to carry out his duties as a headmaster,

does not understand his role. So, the mother is taking care of the children alone without orientation, direction, and guidance from the headmaster (Jaisyurrahman, 2021)

Ustad Bendri says that as a headmaster, a father is obliged to understand and define the vision and mission of the family, and the mother as the executor only follows the outlines. The father is the owner of the rules and the mother is the center of comfort for the child. If there is a mother who “restrains” her child because the father figure does not function properly, then the mother is considered “forced to take the authority of the rules” of the family. For “*Fatherman*”, “The real father” is strict and dares to enforce the rules. The attitude of the father may occasionally be interspersed with gentleness and kindness. When Dad cleans the house, “*Fatherman*” still labels it as “Helping wife” (Jaisyurrahman, 2022). This paradigm means that only the father has the right to be the head of the household, while the mother only plays a secondary role. Mothers do not get to play a part in the family’s vision and mission. The label “*Qawwam*” is intended for husbands or fathers only. This concept is not only conveyed in online meeting content such as the webinar entitled “*Mau dibawa kemana anak kita*”, but also in “*Fatherman*” books. (Jaisyurrahman, 2021). They apply this concept to various contexts, both when the father, as the provider, determines the family’s vision and mission and determines every decision in the family. This labeling is inappropriate if applied generally because the concept of *Qawwam* in the al-Qur’an refers to responsibility that must be carried out by someone who has the capacity, expertise, and ability. So the meaning of “*Qawwam*” in Surah al-Nisa’ verse 34 cannot be a basis for stating that men’s humanity is superior to women’s (Abdul Qadir, 2019).

Second, “Fatherman”’s content from a gender perspective. From a gender perspective, the material provided by “Fatherman” still seems ambiguous and semi-patriarchal. On the one hand, they want to encourage a father figure to be involved in the domestic sphere, but on the other hand, they still uphold the concept of patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy often places men in the public sphere and women in the domestic sphere. The shadows of gender discrimination like this are still visible when the informant “Fatherman” prioritizes women to focus on the domestic area. For the wife or mother to feel at home, the husband is asked to seek comfort by providing facilities that facilitate their activities at home; for example, by providing a comfortable home and the equipment needed by the wife (Jaisyurrahman, 2021).

This gender discrimination paradigm also affects the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives in the household. Men are only required to work and earn a living, while women are required to take care of children and do domestic work. This perspective will form the image that a man’s masculinity is determined by his success as the main breadwinner of the family and protector of his wife and children. On the other hand, if he fails, he often gets bullied by his family and society. This concept is also a chronology of the term “housewife”, while the term “father of the household” is considered taboo and reduces the level of masculinity of a man (Azzuhdi, 2019).

If “Fatherman” pays attention to gender equality, then the principle that must be offered is co-equal shared parenting. Nancy E Dowd said that co-parenting is not about a hierarchy, it is about sharing and equally valuing a role. So, the connection, negotiation, and sharing of parenting tasks are values that are seen as equal (Dowd, 2012). In addition, the head of the family need not necessarily be a man (Okin, 1987 and Rapport, 1991). In the concept of leadership, anyone can be a leader.

Third, the social transformation of "Fatherman"'s perspective. Social transformation is often interpreted as a complete change in form, appearance, nature, character, and so on. Social transformation can occur due to several things, such as accumulation of culture, contact with other cultures, heterogeneous population, social chaos, and change itself. Regarding the role of fathers in parenting, changes are starting to appear. In the past, the role of the father as the main provider affected the image that fathers did not need to be involved in parenting. So, his absence, both physically and psychologically, was considered a natural thing. However, in the last two decades, many studies have shown that the problems of children and adolescents stem from the absence of a father figure (Ashari, 2018; Park et al., 2015; Ramadhani et al., 2021).

The absence of important roles for fathers will have negative impacts on children's self-esteem, and feelings of anger and shame because they are different from other children and cannot perceive the experience of togetherness with a father that is felt by other children. Missing the role of a father in nurturing also causes a child to feel lonely and envious, in addition to grief and loss, which is accompanied by low self-control, initiative, the courage to take risks and harmed psychology of well-being, as well as a tendency to have neurotics (Sundari & Herdajani, 2013). Cases like this not only happen to boys (Osmond, 2010) but also to girls (L. M. Jackson, 2010). Even today, the absence of a father results in an acute psychological symptom called *Fatherless Daughter Syndrome*. As reported on the *merahputih.com* page, Dwi Astarini said that this syndrome will make it difficult for women to create social relationships with the opposite sex (Astarini, 2021).

Along with social, economic, and cultural changes, it has had an influence on society in perceiving the role of father figures in child care and development (Salgado et al., 2021). Currently, the father figure can play a role in various things including parenting, participation in activities,

and educational issues. Policies that used to focus more on mothers have begun to provide opportunities and space for father figures to express themselves in the parenting process (Parmanti & Purnamasari, 2015; Muryadi, 2021).

On the one hand, “*Fatherman*”’s efforts will provide Indonesian families with the strategies to deal with these cases. “*Fatherman*” moves from a father figure who is often imaged as having the highest authority in the family. If the father realizes his roles and responsibilities, then he will better understand his wife and the mother of his children. In the end, there will be cultural changes in the family which will affect the social transformation of society (Harris et al., 2006; Rosenthal, 2000).

But on the other hand, “*Fatherman*” also needs to be careful in anticipating the notion of gender justice which provides all spaces without barriers between men and women (Verwoerd, 1996). Simply put, if it appears in a family with the concepts of “Father of the household” and “Mother of working”, “*Fatherman*” can still provide a proactive attitude without condescending or blaming. The family is the first and foremost institution to prepare quality human resources (HR). Therefore, families are expected to have strong resilience, economically, socially, mentally, and spiritually (Soeradi, 2013).

Conclusion

According to this study, the concept of fatherhood as presented highlights the need for a critical examination of gendered expectations and roles within families and society. From a feminist perspective, it is essential to promote more equitable and inclusive models of fatherhood that emphasize consistent emotional and physical presence and shared responsibilities. The strategy adopted by the founders of the “*Fatherman*” agency, namely Ustadz Bendri Jaisyurrahman and Ayah Irwan Rinaldi, influenced fathers to become aware of their important role

in the domestic sphere. This can be seen from the testimonials of online course participants, followers of the “*Fatherman*” account, and readers of the “*Fatherman*” books. In addition, the understanding of the role and involvement of fathers has changed over time. Being a father has always been a diverse concept, although there has been a change in the role of a father from being just a provider to being a role model for children, partners for wives, and, finally, parenting. Talking about the relationship between father and mother cannot be separated from the concept of gender. Based on a gender perspective, the material presented by “*Fatherman*” still seems ambiguous and semi-patriarchal. The fundamental barrier of masculinity as currently constructed creates tension for a man to be fully involved in nurturing and household work. While “*Fatherman*” aims to encourage fathers to actively engage in parenting, they advertently reinforce gender superiority or perpetuate traditional gender roles.

The social transformation that “*Fatherman*” offers is in changing the perception of the father’s role in parenting and child development. Nowadays, father figures can express themselves in a variety of ways, including in child rearing and education. Certainly, there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to the fatherlessness crisis in Indonesia today. However, “*Fatherman*” agency will be one of the leading voices in providing an understanding of the father’s role. In a social transformation context and endeavoring gender-neutral co-parenting, it is crucial for “*Fatherman*” to avoid domesticating women. By steering away from domestication, both fathers and mothers are encouraged to have equal opportunities for self-actualization in the public sphere. In other words, individuals, regardless of gender, should have the freedom to pursue their goals, ambitions, and personal development outside the boundaries of traditional gender roles.

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