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Assessing the Role of Parents in Ensuring Child Welfare: Integration of Basic Needs, Education, and Christian Family Values in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The perception that having children is an honor and aspiration illustrates the importance of genealogical elements within the family. This concept is linked to the belief that children, especially sons, are a gift and blessing from God. The child's name is considered significant, often theophoric, reflecting the parents' hopes, beliefs, and faith in God. In daily life, children play a crucial role in continuing the lineage, engaging in family work, and assisting in strengthening family authority and local governance. Education is imparted within the family, with the mother taking on the role of providing moral instruction, and the father providing religious and practical life teachings. Young girls are taught about their roles as wives and household managers. This research, therefore, aimed to explore the role of parents in ensuring the well-being of children. Based on the research findings, respondents acknowledged the crucial role of parents in ensuring the basic needs of children, shaping family culture, managing roles and responsibilities, preventing conflicts, and educating children about important social and cultural values. Open communication and a holistic approach, including religious values, were recognized as essential elements in the development of a healthy family. Based on this research, the researcher recommends developing and implementing educational programs for parents focusing on their crucial role in meeting the basic needs of children, shaping family culture, addressing roles and responsibilities, preventing conflicts, and imparting important social and cultural values to their children, encourage collaboration between churches, educational institutions, and government agencies to provide educational support and resources to Christian families.

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Publication History

Received: 11th March, 2024

Accepted: 29th April, 2024

Published online:

21st May, 2024

Keywords: *Role of Parents, Child Welfare, Basic Needs, Education, Christian Family Values*

INTRODUCTION

Insights from Scholarly Analyses and Historical Perspectives

The concept of child abuse can be understood through the analysis of the family life in ancient Israel, as discussed in various works, including Roland de Vaux's book "Ancient Israel: Social Institution,"¹ as well as works by Leo Perdue titled "Families in Ancient Israel: The Family, Religion, and Culture."²

¹ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965).

² Leo G Perdue, *Families in Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt also address this topic in their book titled "Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant."³

In this context, the analysis of the family life in Israel encompasses not only the early periods but also the monarchy period.⁴ Special attention is given to the aspects of children in the family life of Israel in articles such as "Children in the Hebrew Bible" and "Children in the Hebrew Bible and Childist Interpretation".

Flynn refers to the analyses of Blenkinsopp and Aries, stating that some concepts are unclear and lack focus on the conception of childhood in these writings.⁵ Flynn emphasises that this assumption is rooted in broader studies from the 1960s, asserting that the concept of childhood is largely a modern construction, and periods before the 19th century did not pay sufficient attention to childhood as it is considered crucial today.⁶

Flynn's analysis is further reinforced by Parker's view, emphasising that attention to children is a necessity, and children have equal importance as adults as integral members of their society.⁷ Thus, the concept of child abuse can be understood through this study, where attention and protection of children are considered integral parts of the family and societal structure during that time.⁸

Concerning marriage, there is a proverb in Israelite tradition that says, "An Israelite who does not take a wife cannot be called a man." This is found only in the Talmud but was already a perspective in ancient Israelite society.⁹ Even "a man who finds a wife is likened to having found a treasure and has obtained favor from the Lord," as expressed by Solomon, "houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a loving wife comes from the Lord."¹⁰ In his explanation, Cornill quotes Rabbi Eliezer's explanation regarding the words "man, ish," and "woman, ishshah." Both words have two consonants, alef, and shin, with a yod added to the man and he to the woman; both are *yod* he/י, both being a short form of the sacred name of God. And that שׁ (esh) means fire.¹¹ This implies that "the name of God has been placed in the names of the man (Adam) and the woman (*ishshah*)."¹²

According to Cornill, "the position of the wife and children in the family, if the wife herself is legally considered the property of her husband, the same applies to the children: in law, the relationship of the wife and children to the husband and father is akin to that of slaves. Therefore, the Apostle Paul was thinking and speaking when he said in the Galatian church (verse 1): 'As long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate someday.'"¹³ The father has the right to sell the children, with the single limitation that it is not to someone from a foreign tribe. He also has the right to disown, as soon as possible, the rights of primogeniture, i.e., to transfer the rights of the firstborn to someone who is not the firstborn; at least this prerogative is explicitly abolished by Deuteronomy 21:15-17.

The analysis by Flynn and Parker position children as essential and integral parts of their society. In this article, the author refers to the analyses of both earlier authors to discuss children in the ancient Israelite tradition concerning the roles of parents in the family life of Israel. After delineating the roles of parents in the family life of Israel, this article will then portray parents' perceptions of children in Indonesia.

³ Albertz Rainer and Rudiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

⁴ Shawn W. Flynn, "Children in Ancient Israel: The Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia in Comparative," *Wiley Online Library* 12, no. 8 (2018): 1–11, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12267>.

⁵ Julie Faith Parker, "Children in the Hebrew Bible and Childist Interpretation," *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 2 (February 4, 2019): 130–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476993X18821324>.

⁶ Shawn W. Flynn, *Children in the Bible and the Ancient World: Comparative and Historical* (London & New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2019).

⁷ Flynn, *Children in the Bible and the Ancient World: Comparative and Historical*.

⁸ Parker, "Children in the Hebrew Bible and Childist Interpretation," 130, 131.

⁹ Carl Heinrich Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel," *JSTOR* 13, no. 1 (1992).

¹⁰ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel," 2.

¹¹ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel," 3.

¹² Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel," 3.

¹³ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel," 4.

Galut, in his thesis, suggests that parental neglect of responsibilities toward children leads to violations of children's fundamental rights.¹⁴ This means that the church and families must take responsibility and work together to guide children, ensuring their protection and well-being. A lack of understanding of child abuse within families may be a contributing factor to physical, psychological, sexual, and social violence committed by parents against children.¹⁵ This involves physical and behavioral disabilities in children, parents' limited understanding of child-rearing, poverty, a culture that dominates children, and weak legal control.

The Indonesian government, through the Directorate General of Christian Community Guidance, is actively educating the church to create a child-friendly environment.¹⁶ However, it should be understood that the family is the center of education.¹⁷

The church and Christian families in Indonesia must be aware of and understand the issue of child abuse. Child abuse within families is a serious problem that has come under scrutiny within family environments in Indonesia. In this context, the church has a responsibility to play a crucial role in addressing and preventing such actions. This research attempts to delve deeper into the role of parents in ensuring the well-being of children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental Authority and Educational Dynamics in Ancient Israelite Society

Indeed, the father has the authority over life and death concerning his child; that is, he can punish the child, and in certain circumstances (Gen. 38:24), even the son-in-law can be punished. Of course, in the specific cases defined, the book of Deuteronomy establishes these paternal rights in a very distinctive manner.¹⁸ "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.'¹⁹ Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear."²⁰

In Cornill's analysis, he states that the parents are not judged by others before their son; instead, both parents act as investigators and judges, with only the execution being withheld from them. Upon their request and simple notification, the city's inhabitants must carry out the death penalty against the disobedient child. This is a consistent development of paternalistic authority similar to what we see in Roman law. Concerning this, "the first thing demanded of the child is to truly respect his parents. 'Honor your father and your mother' already appears in the Ten Commandments, and in Leviticus 19:3 and 20:9."²¹ In this context, parents bear full responsibility for the moral education of their child. It is a disgrace for both parents if the child acts disobediently, as, within their rights, they can punish their child.

According to Butler, many theories and practices of Christian education have roots in Judaism.²² Similar to Christian worship replacing Judaistic practices in many synagogues, this heritage is not easily changed in the Christian church. In all these aspects, "education exhibits some common

¹⁴ Hironimus Galut, "Peran Gereja Mengatasi Child Abuse Dalam Keluarga" (IFTK Ledalero, 2022).

¹⁵ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu et al., "Understanding the Role of Parents in Teaching the Faith Through the Election of Israel," in *1st Virtual Workshop on Writing Scientific Article for International Publication Indexed SCOPUS* (Sciendo, 2022), 170–75, <https://doi.org/10.2478/9788366675827-031>.

¹⁶ Kristen Ditjen Bimas, "Bimas Kristen Siapkan Pedoman Rumah Ibadah Ramah Anak Jakarta," 2023, <https://bimaskristen.kemenag.go.id/news-395-bimas-kristen-siapkan-pedoman-rumah-ibadah-ramah-anak.html>.

¹⁷ Noh I Boiliu et al., "Family As The First Locus Of Christian Religious Education Learning : Textual Analysis Of Deuteronomy 6 : 7-9," *Psychology and Education* 57 (2020): 10962–70.

¹⁸ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel."

¹⁹ Steven A. Rogers, "The Parent-Child Relationship as an Archetype for the Relationship between God and Humanity in Genesis," *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 5 (2002): 377–85, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014417821619>.

²⁰ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel."

²¹ Cornil, "The Education of Children in Ancient Israel."

²² Butler, *Religious Education*, 6.

features. Throughout all periods, there is no formal schooling; education takes place in life. The family is the head of the educational institution. The first important thing for a teacher is to act as a parent, prophet, priest, sophist (wise person), and poet. The beginning of instruction is given individually as early as possible, but it will develop further and incorporate many things that we now call adult education. Priests and prophets are teachers, as mentioned, but primarily, they are teachers of adults."²³ Torah scholars, after the exile, became significant figures in Jewish education.²⁴

The most fundamental aspect of education is the assumption that the basic reality of family life is the place where God is first introduced to children and has an impact on their lives. "The fundamental assumption about the family as the first institution to know the will of God can be shaped because of observable habits from every Hebrew individual."²⁵

In the Ancient Near East (ANE), Gorroway, through his website and book "Children in the Ancient Near Eastern Household," asserts that children are an essential part of the ancient Near Eastern household (cf. Stager²⁶).²⁷ Julie F. Parker echoes Gorroway, stating that research on children in the context of the ancient Near East continues to develop to this day.²⁸ This idea may seem straightforward but can be understood in many ways. At a basic level, children are needed to perpetuate the household. On a deeper level, the definition of children and household members is far from categorical. Research that explores what a child is and how the gender and social status of a child affect their position in the household is crucial for a proper understanding of the ancient Near Eastern household. Perceptions of having children and the family lifestyle in Ancient Israel significantly contrast with families in the 21st century. One of the primary roles of women in the household is to bear children, especially sons. Leo Perdue explains, "... they provide their households, including their mothers, with security, economic well-being, and social status."²⁹

Giving birth to and raising children in the ancient world was also a potential source of anxiety regarding the health of both mother and child. As Bergmann mentions, "Archaeological evidence indicates that women in ancient Israel were pregnant an average of eight times, but only two out of eight children reached adulthood."³⁰ Moreover, for the people of Israel, having children was not only about continuing the lineage but also about perpetuating the family dynasty. It encompassed economic, social, and political elements. Thus, a child was not merely a consequence of biological relationships but was also sociologically significant for the ancient Israelites.³¹

The daily lives of children in Ancient Israel varied depending on whether they lived in larger cities or agricultural settings, which influenced the socio-economic standards of living and types of work. The family structure was multigenerational and involved social arrangements with several families connected by blood and marriage, living in two or three architecturally interconnected houses.³² As Gerstenberger pointed out, "the private homes of kin-related groups are interconnected."³³ Anthropologically, this highlights the strong kinship ties among Israelite families. The "bet ab" (family house) was the smallest unit in ancient Israelite families.³⁴ Despite being the smallest unit, the "bet ab"

²³ Butler, *Religious Education*, 6.

²⁴ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu, Haryadi Sarjono, and Harun Y Natonis, "Land in the Torah as a Source of Christian Religious Education.," *E-Journal of Religious & Theological Studies (ERATS)* 9, no. 3 (2023).

²⁵ Boiliu, Sarjono, and Natonis, "Land in the Torah as a Source of Christian Religious Education," 18.

²⁶ Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260, no. 260 (2014): 1–35.

²⁷ Gorroway, "Children in the Ancient Near East"; Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel."

²⁸ Parker, "Children in the Hebrew Bible and Childist Interpretation," 2.

²⁹ Leo G. Perdue, *The Family, Religion, and Culture*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

³⁰ Claudia D Bergmann, *Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1-18* (Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

³¹ Robert B. Coote and David Rober Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 129.

³² Perdue, *The Family, Religion, and Culture*, 175.

³³ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies in the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). On page 21, Gerstenberger provides an example related to the story of Ruth. That kinship becomes a crucial element binding them together. In his explanation related to Village and Small Town, Gerstenberger notes that from an anthropological perspective, the function of locality becomes a significant element in the village and small town because everyone will know what is happening, as experienced by Naomi and Ruth when entering the town of Bethlehem. "...Is Naomi,....".

³⁴ Eva Maria Lassen, "Family as Metaphor: Family Images at the Time of the Old Testament and Early Judaism," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 6, no. 2 (1992): 247–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018329208584995>.

was considered the center of the nation during the monarchy, and in the prophetic books, this ideal was sought to be reinstated, emphasising the family as the nucleus of the nation.³⁵

The Cultural Significance of Sons in Ancient Israelite Society

The strong kinship ties formed provide insights into the social processes occurring in Israelite society. Glanville asserts that family ties are crucial in the Bible, especially in the book of Deuteronomy.³⁶ These fraternal bonds constitute a cultural system that generates meanings and symbols related to solidarity and responsibility. This connection is embedded in covenants, social laws, and family/tribal laws.³⁷ Solidarity and responsibility represent one of the duties of sons, fulfilled through education as a social process. Eisikovits, in his study, suggests that an examination of any large social institution will provide insights into macro-level social processes.³⁸ Analysing the emerging tendencies in the social function of children's institutions in Israel can be useful for framing this perspective, given that almost twenty percent of adolescents are educated in residential settings. Such studies are expected to enhance our understanding of normative culture.

Ancient Israel was a patriarchal local society where adult sons lived with their fathers. Upon marriage (usually within the clan), the bride would come to live in the father's house of the groom. Separate structures were often added to accommodate the new couple, either integrated into existing structures or adjacent to the common courtyard. A cluster of households was typically grouped to form a village. Perdue indicates that most villages in early Israel's history consisted of no more than 100 people. By the time of the monarchy, some experienced urbanization, but the framework of these small villages persisted until the time of Christ.

A somewhat different perspective comes from Robert B. Coote and David R. Ord, who argue that the family, according to the Yahwist source (Y), is linked to the political-economic factors of that family.³⁹

An example is found in 2 Samuel 3:6-10, illustrating the fundamental conflict between the households of King Saul and David. In the context of the patriarchal family, the purpose of acquiring a wife is to have a son, enabling the male to ensure the continuation of male rule and his succession.⁴⁰ Abner, the commander of Saul's army and a successful chief of Saul's court had gained power in David's court during the war. Saul had a concubine, whom Abner sought to possess because he believed he had rendered services to Saul's family as the commander of Saul's army and chief of Saul's court. However, Saul's son, named Ish-bosheth (Ishbaal), was angered and disagreed with Abner's desire.⁴¹ The reason was that Abner had overthrown Saul's son,⁴² Ish-bosheth, who was the heir to his parents.⁴³ A male child serves as the heir to both the family dynasty and the kingdom.^{44,45} Psalm 127 reveals that a son is an inheritance from Yahweh, even considered a reward (verse 3). Thus, Coote and Ord argue that a son is a measure of a city's strength.⁴⁶ This becomes a characteristic of ruling families aiming for greatness, having local and distant wives who will give birth to native children to become middle leaders, military commanders, chief warriors, prefects (supervisors),

³⁵ Lassen, "Family as Metaphor: Family Images at the Time of the Old Testament and Early Judaism," 248; Johanna Silvana Talupun, "Resensi: Families in Ancient Israel :The Family, Religion, and Culture," *GEMA TEOLOGIKA* 2, no. 1 (April 28, 2017): 97, <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2017.21.297>. American Oriental Society, "Families in Ancient Israel by Leo G. Perdue ; Joseph Blenkinsopp ; John J. Collins ; Carol Review by : Hector Avalos Published by : American Oriental Society American Oriental Society Is Collaborating with JSTOR to Digitize , Preserve and Extend Access " 119, no. 4 (2014): 691–92.

³⁶ Mark R Glanville, "'Festive Kinship': Solidarity, Responsibility, and Identity Formation in Deuteronomy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (September 19, 2019): 133–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089218778582>.

³⁷ Glanville, "'Festive Kinship': Solidarity, Responsibility, and Identity Formation in Deuteronomy."

³⁸ Rivka A Eisikovits, "Children's Institutions in Israel as Mirrors of Social and Cultural Change," *Child & Youth Services* 7, no. 3–4 (1986): 21–29.

³⁹ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴⁰ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴¹ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴² David F. Payne, 1 Dan 2 Samuel (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017), 263-265.

⁴³ Payne, 1 Dan 2 Samuel.

⁴⁴ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴⁵ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴⁶ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

judges, and advisors. If they remain loyal to the kingdom, they become valuable assets. If there is a family kinship bond, it becomes a strong political tie.⁴⁷ Therefore, sons from local marriages have a network of local authority that can help strengthen the family's rule in their domain. Alliances with other nations will expand the political-economic network. These alliances include the expansion of economic, political, and trade networks. They cover not only the trade of goods but also military agreements, and arrangements for the return of defectors to protect against elements of political rebellion.⁴⁸ This is significant for noble sons. Meanwhile, non-noble children (both boys and girls), contribute significantly to labor, and the economy, and influence politics in certain conditions.⁴⁹

Agus Santoso states that a son is a symbol of the return of meaning to life.⁵⁰ An example is when Naomi cares for the son of Ruth, her daughter-in-law, protected by Boaz (a close relative of Naomi's late husband, with the right to redeem and protect Ruth since her husband has passed away, leaving her son) in Ruth 4:13-17. This symbolizes life for Naomi, through her grandson. Thus, sons are crucial for the people of Israel.⁵¹

According to D. J. McCarthy, the relationship between a father and a son is an integral part of the covenant concept in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near Eastern treaties.⁵² Therefore, sons play a crucial role in ancient Israelite families. Thus, a father's treatment of a son in ancient Israelite tradition would differ significantly from that of a daughter because sons have a distinct role in family ties.

According to de Vaux, "in a marriage ceremony in a village or among the Bedouins in modern Palestine, at the threshold of the house or the tent of the feast, a pomegranate is usually broken, and its seeds are scattered."⁵³ According to them, the scattered pomegranate seeds symbolize the hope that the marrying couple will have many children." de Vaux's perspective is supported by the thoughts of Malinowski from ethnographic studies in the Trobriand Islands and its surrounding areas. His studies explore how belief systems in society are interconnected with kinship systems and social organization.

Malinowski emphasises that belief systems within a society are integrated with the entire spectrum of human needs.⁵⁴ The evolving belief system in society aims to manage the fulfillment of needs within the community. Basic needs in society include nutrition, reproduction, body comforts, safety and resilience, relaxation, movement, and growth.⁵⁵ These basic needs are closely related to the beliefs held by the local community. Regarding reproductive needs, Malinowski states that it is the belief system within the society that regulates them. The customs of marriage, sexuality, and the arrival of children as the product of marriage are influenced by the belief system within the community.

In the beliefs of ancient societies, Malinowski explains that a child is evidence that God has blessed the marriage or family. The presence of a child signifies that the married couple has not violated the beliefs of the local community, while the absence of a child indicates that the formed family is rejected by God or cursed by God. Therefore, infertility is considered a disgrace for the family, and the presence of a child in the family is seen as evidence of God's favor and a source of pride for the family. This perception is shaped by the belief system within the community.

Vaux and Malinowski assert that the presence of children in a family is considered an honor within the smallest social institution, namely the family. In line with this, "In ancient Israel, having many children was considered an honor and a desire, and wedding guests often expressed the wish that the couple would be blessed with a large family."⁵⁶ As exemplified by Vaux, "When Rebekah left her family, she was blessed with the words: O sister of ours, be the mother of thousands and even thousands of years"⁵⁷, or when "Boaz married Ruth, the desire was expressed that his young wife might be like

⁴⁷ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 129.

⁴⁸ Coote and Ord, *Sejarah Pertama Alkitab*, 133.

⁴⁹ Parker, "Children in the Hebrew Bible and Childist Interpretation."

⁵⁰ Santoso, *Di Bawah Perlindungan Sayap-Nya*, 142.

⁵¹ Santoso, *Di Bawah Perlindungan Sayap-Nya*, 142.

⁵² Glanville, "'Festive Kinship': Solidarity, Responsibility, and Identity Formation in Deuteronomy," 19.

⁵³ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

⁵⁴ Paul Bohannon and Mark Glazer, *High Points* (USA: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 28.

⁵⁵ Bohannon and Glazer, *High Points*, 28.

⁵⁶ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

⁵⁷ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel (Ruth 4:1-12)."⁵⁸ Meanwhile, "in Genesis, Abraham and later Isaac received the promise that their descendants would be countless, like the stars in the sky and the sand by the sea. This also happened with Hagar."⁵⁹

The texts above indicate that the people of Israel desired children, especially sons. This was intended to perpetuate the family line and wealth, as well as to preserve the ancestors' legacy. Daughters received less attention; they would leave the family when they got married, and thus, the strength of a household was not measured by the number of daughters. "Among the sons, the firstborn enjoyed the right of primogeniture. During the father's lifetime, he took precedence over his siblings (Gen. 43:33). Upon his father's death, he received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17) and became the head of the family."⁶⁰ Not only that, but this became a desire and "self-imposed pressure" for Israeli families, making "children the object of requests."⁶¹ Despite this, the examples cited from Israel's history are exceptions to the usual law and only emphasise the tension between customs and love, which tends to make a father prefer a son born in his old age. On the other hand, the Bible explicitly states that these stories emphasise the fact that God accepted Abel's offering and rejected that of his brother Cain.

The Significance of Naming in Ancient Israel

According to Vaux, a child would be given a name after birth. The name could be chosen by either the mother or the father.⁶² The custom of delaying the naming until circumcision, eight days later, is not recorded until the New Testament era (Luke. 1:59; 2:21). It is also noted that among primitive societies and in the Ancient Near East, names usually indicated the essence of something; giving a name meant understanding and, consequently, having power over it. When God granted authority to humans in Eden to name the animals (Gen. 2:19-20), it signified that humans had power over the animals. Knowing someone's name is to be able to do something to them. Moses, in his quest to know God, sought to know God through His name. This is why it is important to know the true name of one's God. This concept can be found in Eastern religions as well. Since a name defines or indicates existence or essence, it reveals the character and purpose being pursued. Names express hope. Albertz and Schmitt, referring to J.D. Fowler, state that "most Hebrew personal names are theophoric, and thus they constitute an important source for reconstructing Israelite and Judean religion. Names have been used to draw general conclusions regarding ancient Israelite religion..."⁶³ Vaux, Albertz, and Schmitt agree that names (of children) serve as a general representation of the Israelite religion.

In other parts of the Bible, the process or condition of childbirth inspires the names of children. "This may involve the mother giving birth to the child. For example, Rachel. Rachel named her son Ben-Oni, 'son of my sorrow' because when she gave birth to him, she was in great distress. The name of a child is also associated with the attention of the father. For instance, Moses. Moses called his son Gershom because he was born while Moses was a fugitive, a ger, or in a place of refuge."⁶⁴ Indeed, animal names are often used, especially at a young age: Rachel means 'ewe,' Deborah 'bee,' Jonah 'dove,' Caleb 'dog,' Nahash 'serpent,' etc. Some writers still maintain the original names of the family. And that names are evidence of primitive totemism. However, some are individual names, not family names.⁶⁵ Theologically, the name (of a child) serves as a sign of the parents' beliefs and hopes. Meanwhile, culturally (in their religious tradition), parents cultivate their beliefs by naming their children. Behind a name (of a child), meanings are embedded.

⁵⁸ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

⁵⁹ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

⁶⁰ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 42.

⁶¹ Flynn, *Children in the Bible and the Ancient World: Comparative and Historical*.

⁶² Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 43.

⁶³ Rainer and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*.

⁶⁴ Rainer and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 43-44.

⁶⁵ Rainer and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 43-44.

Parental Responsibilities in Ancient Israel: Education, Tradition, and Shaping Societal Fabric

According to Butler, throughout all periods, there were no formal schools; education took place in life. The family was the head of the educational institution. The beginning of teaching was given individually as early as possible.⁶⁶ In the early years, "a child would be cared for by his mother or a babysitter, even when he was weaned (2 Sam. 4:4), and learn to walk. An Israelite child would spend time playing in the street or park with peers, both boys and girls (Jer. 6:11; 9:20; Zech. 8:5; Matt. 11:6). They would sing and dance or play with dolls."⁶⁷ "This is what a mother gives to her children for their first education, specifically in their moral formation (Prov. 1:8; 6:20). She will continue to advise her children during their developmental years, namely adolescence (Prov. 31:1), but for boys in the growing-up phase to adulthood, they are entrusted to their father."⁶⁸ This is the responsibility of both the father and the mother. Indeed, "one of the holiest tasks of a father is to teach his child the right religious teachings (Ex. 10:2; 12:26; Ex. 4:9; 6:7, 20; 32:7, 46) and provide general education (Prov. 1:8; 6:20). The 'rod' and the whip play a role in this training (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Deut. 8:5, Prov. 3:12)."⁶⁹

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, Vaux explains that a father will handle his child for matters of national traditions (in this case, religious traditions) and the divine commandments given to their ancestors (Ex. 10:2).⁷⁰ A father will also provide his children with professional education; in practice, an occupation passed down through generations and the inheritance of craftsmanship. A rabbi says: that whoever does not teach his child a useful trade will lead him to become a thief. Vaux's explanation provides socio-cultural insights into children and the role of parents in their lives. It also emphasises that education begins at home or is received at home. As for daughters, they remain under the supervision of their mothers, learning everything they need to know as a wife and household managers. This situation leads to the care (nurse) provided by parents to their children. Cecilia Wassen, in her article, "On the Education of Children in the Dead Sea Scrolls," mentions that "children are important in the Qumran movement, and both boys and girls receive education."⁷¹

The perception of the ancient Israelites regarding children was that having children was an honor. This perception is closely related to the continuity or genealogical element of the family. In ancient Israel, having many children was considered an honor and a desirable thing, and wedding guests often expressed the wish that the couple would be blessed with a large family. When Rebekah left her family, she was blessed with the words: "May you, our sister, become the mother of thousands upon thousands of people" (Gen. 24:60). Similarly, when Boaz married Ruth, the desire was expressed that his wife, still young and possibly similar to Rachel and Leah, would contribute to building the house of Israel (Ruth. 4:1-12). Children in the tradition of ancient Israel were crucial in shaping the family, not only as heirs to lineage or clan but also in economic factors. Children made significant contributions to the family's economy, working as laborers, slaves, or casual workers. Moreover, children played a vital role in building a great nation, namely Greater Israel.

Sons played an even more crucial role in family ties, serving as the heirs to the family dynasty, especially in noble families. This role extended beyond the core family to the broader family structure. It was closely linked to social, economic, and political aspects, as fathers and sons were bound by a genuine covenant, particularly in the Old Testament.

The most significant aspect is that sons also held a significant function in family ties, preserving solidarity and responsibility. This responsibility was passed down by sons as a continuation of their parents. Such responsibilities were integral to the social and cultural fabric of ancient Israelite traditions.

The responsibilities carried out by parents, both in terms of religion and education, are a necessity because a child is an important part, not only in the context of the family as the smallest

⁶⁶ Butler, *Religious Education*, 6-8.

⁶⁷ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 48.

⁶⁸ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 49.

⁶⁹ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 48.

⁷⁰ Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 48.

⁷¹ Cecilia Wassen, "On the Education of Children in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 41, no. 3 (September 25, 2012): 350-63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429812441339>.

(deepest) social group but also as a part of society as a whole.⁷² This role has a positive influence on the child due to the presence of a positive relationship. 'Positive relationships help shape the positive character of the child'.⁷³ The integration of a child into their society will reflect the educational process taking place within the family. This responsibility cannot be delegated to others, and the continuity of a (normal) society depends on the role played by parents."

The responsibilities carried out by parents 'psychologically have a positive impact due to the relationship built between parents and children'.⁷⁴ In fulfilling their responsibilities, parents not only contribute to the cognitive aspect but also to the psychological well-being of the child."

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is qualitative. The procedure involves the author gathering and reviewing literature on the concept of children in the Old Testament, the concept of child-rearing in the Old Testament, and the dynamics of education in the Old Testament. Based on the literature review on children, parents, and education in the Old Testament, the author derived key ideas that would serve as statements and then serve as the basis for the author to collect data through a Google Form. There were 18 respondents from various church denominations. The collected data were analyzed following these steps: data collection, reading and describing the data, classifying the data, interpreting the data, and presenting the data using a thematic analysis.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Navigating Family Dynamics: Insights from Indonesian Parents on Well-being, Collaboration, Conflict Resolution, and Societal Values

"Based on the qualitative data analysis of responses from 18 married respondents with at least 1 child from various church denominations in Indonesia, several research focuses were identified. They are discussed below.

The Role of Parents in Ensuring the Well-being of Children

The role of parents in addressing the basic needs of children such as food, clothing, and shelter is crucial because it is related to the well-being of the child and also has a direct correlation and impact on the child's education, namely their level of intelligence.

Furthermore, parents also need to pay attention to the physical and psychological aspects of the child, such as providing affection, fostering acceptance between parents and children, and giving appreciation, recognition, and guidance/advice to the child. Parents also need to implement open communication between themselves and their children so that parents can understand and comprehend the needs and desires of the child.

In addition, the role of parents in providing religious and moral education to their children is very important. For example, parents guide faith and belief in Jesus Christ. Similarly, parents play a role in instilling good social and cultural values in children from an early age.

The majority of respondents stated that the role of parents in ensuring the basic needs of children has a direct impact on the development of the child's education, both physically and psychologically. This responsibility is crucial and must be continuously carried out by every parent, as Ngewa suggests that the role of parents is vital in determining the direction and quality of the growth and development of the child. Thus, parents need the ability to address all the needs of the child through nurture, affection, and education through good and proper communication, as this can influence their identity when they grow up.

⁷² Noh Ibrahim Boiliu and Saniago Dakhi, *Menjadi Manusia Otentik* (Jakarta: Hegel Pustaka, 2018).

⁷³ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu et al., "Mengajarkan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Matius 5:6-12," *Kurios* 6, no. 1 (April 29, 2020): 61, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v6i1.128>; Cf. Aasgard, "Children in Antiquity and Early Christianity: Research History and Central Issues."

⁷⁴ Rogers, "The Parent-Child Relationship as an Archetype for the Relationship between God and Humanity in Genesis."

Collaboration between Spouses in Building Family Culture and Values

The collaboration between parents (father and mother) in building the culture and values they want to impart to their children is very important. The majority of respondents emphasised the importance of setting an example for their children by mutually respecting and honoring each other as partners, along with harmony in the family, demonstrating gentleness through words and polite behavior. Examples and role models like these are effective methods for instilling values in children. Additionally, parents need to align their perceptions regarding spiritual and cultural values, such as involving children in community activities and spiritual practices like attending worship services and regularly reading the Bible. Furthermore, consistency and consequences in discipline are crucial because children typically learn from what their parents do.

In this study, the majority of respondents also stated that parents fundamentally aim to build the character of children who are honest, kind-hearted, tolerant, and have strong determination. Some respondents also mentioned the importance of quality time spent together as a family as a way to build culture and values.

Therefore, the collaboration between husband and wife in building and instilling family culture and values is highly important. This can be achieved through setting an example, maintaining consistency and discipline, aligning perceptions, spending quality time together, and providing early education for children."

How to Overcome Roles and Responsibilities in the Family

To address roles and responsibilities in the family, especially in relationships among family members, there needs to be awareness of the importance of mutual assistance and support among family members. The concept of the strong helping the weak' should be applied within the family. Additionally, respondents emphasise the importance of cooperation, assigning tasks, and maintaining a balanced distribution of responsibilities among family members. There should be no gender bias in tasks and work. Clear task assignments based on the roles and functions of each family member are necessary. Specifically for children, it is hoped that they have an understanding of the family rules and are responsible for their studies to achieve their future goals and aspirations.

Respecting and valuing each other are also key elements in managing roles and responsibilities in the family. In addition, family responsibilities that need attention include maintaining the family's reputation, cleanliness, comfort, safety, and communication.

Respondents also emphasised the application of Biblical values. Parents also need to set an example for their children as role models. In the family, the father plays the role of the head of the family while the wife manages the finances.

Thus, values such as cooperation, respect, and a clear understanding of roles in the family are crucial. These principles are integrated with Biblical values and exemplary leadership in the family. Communication is also a very important factor in ensuring that the family can effectively handle roles and responsibilities.

Strategies for Dealing with Family Conflicts

Strategies to avoid or address conflicts within the family involve various approaches, such as consistently praying and involving God in the family, expressing gratitude, understanding each other, compromising, admitting mistakes, being open with each other, and maintaining communication within the family.

Preventing and Addressing Violence or Exploitation Issues

Parents can take steps to prevent or address issues such as physical violence, sexual violence, or exploitation within the family by using a holistic approach. This includes imparting values of love, fostering an understanding of one's identity, ensuring physical protection, and providing sexual education. Additionally, the application of religious values, open communication, and setting an example are crucial in teaching children to live with love for one another.

Involving Children in Understanding Social Roles and Religious Values

Parents can make efforts to involve children in understanding social roles and religious values by setting examples, providing flexibility, engaging children in religious activities, and creating a family environment that supports the moral and spiritual development of children.

Specific Plans or Strategies for Educating Children

Specific plans or strategies for educating children about important family and societal values are emphasised by respondents. There is a focus on the significance of emphasising family and societal values. Additionally, involvement in religious activities, emphasis on setting an example, and efforts to continue learning and growing as parents in educating children are deemed essential.

Supporting Children in Understanding Social and Cultural Differences

Fundamentally, parents are aware of the importance of supporting children in understanding social and cultural differences through teaching, direct experiences, and positive examples. Additionally, children are engaged through participation in community and religious activities, and they are directed to play positive social roles in their environment.

Parental Responsibility in Teaching Important Social Issues

Parents play a role in guiding their children about important social issues, adopting various methods to do so. For example, addressing social and economic inequality, uneven access to healthcare and education, combating racial, religious, or sexual orientation discrimination, and the impact of technology on society and individual privacy. Additionally, efforts to alleviate poverty and hunger are acknowledged.

Supporting Children's Education in Line with Family and Religious Values

A comprehensive approach that includes religious values, parental examples, social interactions, and participation in religious and social activities. Parents can set good examples as children learn from what they see and hear. Therefore, parents need to provide good examples regarding family and religious values. Parents can also discuss family and religious values with their children, asking them questions about what they know and helping them understand. Moreover, parents encourage children to participate in religious and social activities. This can help them better understand family and religious values and apply them in daily life.

The Importance of Open Communication in Understanding Social Roles and Family Values

Open communication between parents and children is considered the primary foundation for shaping healthy relationships, supporting children's growth, and providing support in facing everyday life challenges. With open communication, parents can help their children develop a better understanding of themselves, their families, and their communities. This can contribute to children becoming happier, healthier, and more successful individuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion, the researcher recommends the following:

1. **Parental Education Programs:** Develop and implement educational programs for parents focusing on their crucial role in meeting the basic needs of children, shaping family culture, addressing roles and responsibilities, preventing conflicts, and imparting important social and cultural values to their children. These programs should emphasise open communication and holistic approaches that include religious values.
2. **Collaborative Efforts:** Encourage collaboration between churches, educational institutions, and government agencies to provide educational support and resources to Christian families. This collaboration can involve organising workshops, seminars, and counseling sessions aimed at enhancing parental skills and knowledge.

3. **Community Support:** Foster a supportive community environment where families feel empowered and encouraged to fulfill their responsibilities in guiding and supporting their children. This can be achieved through community initiatives, support groups, and access to relevant resources.
4. **Advocacy for Children's Rights:** Advocate for policies and initiatives that prioritise the protection and fulfillment of children's basic rights within the family and community context. This includes ensuring that children are provided with a nurturing environment that promotes their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

By implementing these recommendations, the church, government, and families can work together to create a nurturing environment where children can thrive and grow into healthy individuals with a strong foundation in their Christian faith and values.

CONCLUSION

The research results indicate that respondents acknowledge the crucial role of parents in ensuring the basic needs of children, shaping family culture, addressing roles and responsibilities, preventing conflicts, and educating children about important social and cultural values. Open communication and a holistic approach, including religious values, are recognised as essential elements in the development of a healthy family. With this understanding, parents can be more effective in guiding and supporting the development of their children. Families should be the focus of education. The church and the government must be able to carry out an educational function for Christian families so that they are educated in guiding their children. The church and families must take responsibility and work together to guide children, ensuring their protection and service so that the basic rights of children are fulfilled.

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