



Parenting: Tablighi Jamaat Point of View

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i5.354>

Abstract

Despite the documented importance of parenting style in early intervention, little is known about how parenting in a specific ethnic or group. This paper describes a religious adaptation of a parenting intervention from tablighi jamaat community under living in Jombang district- East Java, Indonesia. The purpose of this study was to explore, appreciate, and describe their experiences using a phenomenological methodology. Narratives were collected from nine participants of parents in tablighi jamaat community. Four thematic clusters were identified and an exhaustive description is presented to summarize the essence of their lived experience. The study indicates a strong sense of essential positivism for the participant's stories, and overall it seems the implementation of Islamic religious values has brought some degree of spiritual, socially, and psychological meaning to their lives that they may not have otherwise noticed or experienced.

Keywords: Parenting; Tablighi Jamaat; Phenomenology; Religious; Child Development

Introduction

Parents have a critical role in shaping their children's development. Research find that Parenting of mothers and fathers may be independently and interactively related to child outcomes (Kaczynski., Lindahl., Malik., & Laurenceau., 2006; National Institute for Child Health and Development Early Child Care Research Network [NICHD ECCRN]., 2004; Ryan., Martin., & Brooks-Gunn., 2006; Tamis-LeMonda., Shannon., Cabrera., & Lamb., 2004). They teach both cognitive and non-cognitive skills including perseverance, self-control, and self-esteem, skills that may affect school success and adult achievement (Heckman., 2011; Peterson and Seligman., 2004; Duckworth and Quinn., 2009).

There are several factors that influence parenting, and religion is one of them. It is one of the several cultural systems that shape family and encourage family orientation (Georgas et al., 2006). Much is known about how religion may influence family attitudes and practices, but few studies have examined how familial religious beliefs and practices may shape the lives of young children. Pertinent literature and studies consistently point out that parents' religious involvement associates with multiple beneficial factors that might enhance family resilience and relationship quality (Dollahite et al., 2004; Mahoney., 2005). One study suggests that frequent family discussions about religion and religious participation by

two parents are positively associated with pro-social behavior and negatively associated with problem behavior among young children (Bartkowski et al., 2008).

Tablighi jamaat (Convey Group or Group for conveying the message of Islam) is one of an independent transnational movement of Islamic faith regeneration. From its humble beginnings in Mewat Tablighi Jama'at gradually grew from local to national settings and ultimately traversed the globe by entering over two hundred countries becoming the world's largest transnational movement of Islamic faith regeneration (Ali., 2010). Tablighi Jamaat originated in northern India in the 1920s and is a scion of several generations of Ulama (Islamic scholars and religious leaders) associated with Deoband. Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (d. 1944) is taken to be the founder of Tablighi Jamaat. This group has no formal bureaucratic structure and is a highly decentralized voluntary movement with no official name. The name 'Tablighi Jamaat' has been publicly adopted but not officially used, it has no offices and no archives. They are a Muslim movement that seeks to become a Muslim who runs his religion and this Jamaah becomes the only Islamic movement that does not look at the origins of its followers. The rise of the Tablighi Jamaat to 130 countries has brought this religious movement, which lived on the fringe of society, to the mainstream. In particular, the presence of the Tablighi Jamaat in South Asia is overwhelming. The movement has created opportunities for business, education and staged mass marriages held at its numerous ijtimas.

Tablighi jamaat has rituals and practice as their routine actions and khuruj is one of them. Khuruj (preaching tour) is the 'engine' that drives the Tablighi Jamaat. To take a mission on khuruj one need not be an 'alim (Islamic scholar). This is because of the Tablighi Jamaat doesn't see the task of spreading Islam confined to the 'ulama' (Muslim scholars) or simply the pious but a religious obligation of every Muslim. (Ali., 2010) The Tablighi Jamaat emphasizes the egalitarian status of believers and, therefore, membership to the movement is on a voluntary basis. Those who join the work cover for their own expenses and come from varying socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Khuruj has three key rituals – ta'lim (education), jola (preaching mission), and bayan (religious talk or speech). Khuruj is treated by Tablighis as a vehicle for self-reformation. The aim of khuruj is to form a group and embark on a preaching tour, for a set time—6 months, then 3 months, 40 days, 20 days, one week, and three days – to learn din (a religion of Islam) in order to reform oneself and then help others embrace din in their lives (Jabir 2008). In tablighi jamaah, khuruj activity is not only for men. The woman also has a responsibility to participate but there some quite clear rules and order before. The existence of khuruj tradition makes the parents leave their children for temporary and they will be left with their grandparents or with other families who entrusted as their caretaker. So, the children will grow up in families in which one parent or both of them is temporarily absent.

In this paper, we aim to make accessible information about parenting in Tablighi Jamaat point of view that may be valuable to support parenting in the modern environment. A number of research implications are discussed, with the aim of stimulating more empirical attention in this research area.

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to ascertain the experiences of religious adaptation of a parenting intervention from tablighi jamaat community under living in Jombang district-East Java, Indonesia. To meet this goal, we oriented our research in the methodology of phenomenology as an approach. The aim of this approach is to determine what an experience means for those who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it (Pietersen., 2002). This approach is based on several assumptions: 1) meaning and knowing are social constructions, always incomplete and developing; 2) the investigator is a part of the experience being studied and the investigator's values play a role in the investigation; 3) bias is inherent in all research and should be

articulated at the beginning; 4) participants and investigators share knowledge and are partners; 5) common forms of expression (e.g., words or art) are important; and 6) meanings may not be shared by everyone (Boss et al). Phenomenology may be the method of choice when you want to study what an experience means to a particular group of people (Grossoehme., 2014). Thus, it is suitable using phenomenology as an approach in this research.

Participants included nine-person, three male, and six female. All of the participants were parents in tablighi jamaat community. Giorgi (1985) articulate a method that consists of the following steps to analyze participant's stories of their lived experiences. The procedural steps used in this study were as follows:

1. The research team immerses themselves in the data. They do this by reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews and listening to the recorded interviews so that they can hear the tone and timbre of the voices.
2. The texts are coded, in which the words, phrases or sentences that stand out as describing the experience or phenomena under study, or which express outright its meaning for the participant are extracted or highlighted.
3. Similar meaning units are placed into categories.
4. For each meaning unit the meaning of the participants' own words is spelled out.
5. Each of the transformed statements of meaning are combined into a few thematic statements that describe the experience.

Results

The phenomenological data analysis process transformed the combined set of nine narrative transcripts into 149 significant statements, 76 meaning statements, four thematic clusters, and an exhaustive description summarizing the results. The exhaustive description was used to capture the essence of the phenomenon. As a result of the data analysis process, the following thematic clusters were identified: a) family system; b) religious influence; c) providing care; d) future thinking. Each cluster will be defined and detailed examples of supporting data provided.

Family System

This cluster describes the family system in tablighi jamaat community. Each member of the family has a different role such as the mother is the primary caregiver of children while the father is the head of the family and is responsible as the breadwinner. But for parenting, they both have an equal role and help each other on child rearing. There is no specific role that must be done for mother or father. It is because there's always discussion in the family before. So each member of the family can agree and accept their duties.

“we always had a discussion during ta'lim, there are no certain duties for each family member, it's equal.”

“for parenting, both of us must have a responsibility, if I’m busy then my husband must help me. And it happens for my husband too. If I’m forcing my children doing something, such as studying, praying or recite Qur’an, my husband must agree with me also.”

Interestingly, some participants felt the different way of responsibility and their role. They said that it is a must to follow husband decision including on child rearing or to make a decision for their children’s future.

“I’m not like that, even if I’m looking bit arrogance. But in the family role, I give in to my husband to make a decision. If I’m not giving in, how can I get 8 children?. He’s always won. But here it is, it is our destiny that we as a woman must obey our husband. Like it or not it’s all just the number of our ages. We have to learn to be patient, accept our destiny. Whatever and how much we got, we must be grateful for that”

Religious Influence

This cluster describes parent’s perceptions of how parents in tablighi jamaat built their family system based on the religious aspects including parenting and relation between family member. The religious way of child-rearing has a profound contribution to the development of their children. Related to child rearing, few participants shared that religion plays a big role in parenting. Such as introducing their children to religious activity since their kid. It is to prevent the children from bad influence when they live in the social world.

“...and then we introduce them (children) with sunnah (behavior of Prophet Muhammad) since the beginning. We can see how bad the influence from outside, so we must protect our children. And early religious adaptation is one of the ways to protect them”

“So we’re live in a Creator’s (Allah) earth, we’ve been taking care by Allah, we’ve been watched by Allah, it’s a shame if we betrayed Allah. We always remind these basic beliefs to our children. Even if they still a baby, it’s a must, because it is important to me.”

“We teach them on ta’lim (set time for teaching and learning in) every day after Isya prayer since a baby, we learned together, reading Fadhilah Amal (Tablighi text), talk revolving around the Six Principles of the movement and tajwid (reciting the Qur’an with proper intonation)”

“but for me, it’s a must for my children to recite Al-Qur’an Surah Waqi’ah and Surah Yaasin every day because it has a benefit for our life”

“but for me, it’s a must for my children to recite Al-Qur’an Surah Waqi’ah and Surah Yaasin every day because it has a benefit for our life My last kid still on process learning salat 5 times, recite Qur’an. I also told him that male must salat in the Mosque, so I always ask him to go to the Mosque with his father. But when his father not at home or khuruj for few day or months so I have a responsibility to accompany him to go to the Mosque 5 times, and pick him up after salat, although the mosque pretty far from here. Even from early morning prayer, I drop him off at the Mosque riding my bike. It’s not easy I admit it, but it always needs an effort to get there. Even I know that he just a kid, and not serious yet doing salat and prayer at least we built a religious habit. And for the result my son always asking to wake him up at 3.00 am, taking a bath, do tahajud prayer and recite Al-Qu’ran. And he just 6 years old now.”

Providing Care

The third cluster pertains to how the parents reported providing care, their role in parenting in every condition. As we describe above, they both have a same equal role in child rearing. But for a certain condition such as khuruj, this would be different. They reported performing tasks associated with emotional, physical, financial, household, and social support. When one of the parent temporary absence because of khuruj, most of all participants did not perceive caregiving as a burden, although there were barriers effected on household stability.

“There are five behaviors of the Sahabah (The companions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH) that we must believe and implement in our lives and the 5th behavior of the sahabah is whole-hearted. Me for example, my husband absence for 4 months so I must keep this household stable. I accept this with my whole heart if I'm not then it will be my loss and useless. I got nothing in akhirah (afterlife).”

“God will ask for our responsibility when we die. When our husband goes for khuruj, me as a wife, I must protect my family, my child, my husband's dignity when he's not home. There's a lot of misery everywhere, it is hard I must admit it but it will be alright. And where's the grace? The misery is the grace when we are grateful for that. I through a lot of problems when my husband khuruj but I believed it will be alright.”

“Don't be afraid that we won't be able to eat. It's already fulfilled by Allah. Even if I got no money in my pocket I'm not afraid. Why would I? because every single thing cannot give any advantages or loss without God's permission. All we have comes from God's. Allah Khaliq (The Creator), Allah Malik (The Absolute Ruler), Allah Razzaq (The Sustainer). Allah created us, Allah takes care of us, Allah is the one who gives us the meaning of life. That's what I teach to my children every single day to build their sentiment of the God existence.”

Future Thinking

Many participants spoke about wishes for their children in the future, and they wish for their children to become a Hafiz or Hafiza (someone who completely memorize the Qur'an) because there are many advantages they can get from that.

“one of Imam in here have told me to make all of my children to become a hafiz, then I said Insha Allah (if Allah wills so) then I'm kindly asking you to pray for me. My first daughter also ask for me to send her to pesantren (Islamic boarding school) to learn more about Islam and also become hafiza”

“I always pray to God and wish for all my children to become hafiz hafiza, abid abida (the one who worships), Saleh Saleha, alim alima. And let Allah decide what's the best for us”

“yeah, I wish my son can be a dai person, what I mean is I wish he can be a person who always dawah to everyone and representing Islam as the way of his life. Keeping up sunnah that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has taught us. That's what I'm hoping for my sun become. Oh and also I wished that he become a hafiz because Allah has given special privileges to the one who memorizes the Qur'an in a number of ways in this world and in the Hereafter.”

Discussion

Participant narratives provided us with information about how parents in Tablighi Jamaat community experienced on parenting and how the religion impact their family system include child rearing and each member role in the household. Researchers have reported that religious beliefs and practices have the potential to profoundly influence many aspects of life, including to parenting. Religion also helps to shape parental values and practices (Bartkowski et al., 2008). All of the participants describe a strong influence of religion in their life, especially on parenting. They believed that the first and the principal things they had to teach to their children is fostering faith. They believed by introducing the existence of God their children can protect themselves from bad influence outside. Furthermore, research suggests that religious activity may encourage parents to be more involved in their children's lives (Mahoney., 2010).

Limitation of Study

This study was used to explore the phenomenological of parenting based on tablighi jamaat parents point of view. Investigators took measures to make this study as true to the experience as possible. However, as with all research, this study has its limitation. The first limitation is related to investigator's biases. Although measures were taken to minimize investigator bias such as bias statements, reflexive journals, member checking as with all research there is really no way to confirm that biases did not inappropriately inform the data collection and analysis processes. The second limitation is the sample that lacks diversity. All of the participants were from the same region, thus may have influenced the participant's narratives. Lastly, the participant's was recruited by the key informant. The fact that these participants may mean that they are qualitatively different than those not become part of this research. Tablighi Jamaat parents whose not involved in this research may experience the phenomenon quite differently.

Conclusion

This strong belief shows how religion becomes the ultimate standard of behavior. Family spirituality is perceived to be able to connect them with a God that gives a positive impact. More research also reported individuals find peace through submission to the Creator's rules. If people accept and follow these rules, peace and tranquility will result.

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