



## Work-Family Balance and Quality of Parenting in Optimizing Children Development

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DOI 10.15294/ijeces.v4i1.9447

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### Article Info

Received April 2015  
Accepted May 2015  
Published June 2015

#### Keywords:

family works balance;  
quality of parenting;  
child development

### Abstract

Stimulant, which comes from their environment especially their parent is needed to maximize child growth in their golden age. A working mother who is unable to balancing family and work obtained in a poor parenting. This condition will influence the child growth. The objective of this research is to describe any supporting and inhibiting factors for child growth, in particular, those related to the balance of work and quality of parenting. The samples of this research were 15 working mothers. The method of the research was using qualitative approach, referring to the naturalistic paradigm, which source from phenomenological view. This research generated descriptive data in the form of words, which were taken from observation, interview, document content, and recorder. The data is about the balance of family work and the quality of parenting to maximize the child growth. This research showed that: a) when the mother was capable of balancing her work and family and felt satisfy for her husband assistance, the child growth would be maximal, b) when the mother was able to balance her work and family but too tired in the cause of her role, no parenting support or collaboration between husband and wife, then the child growth would be less maximal, c) when the mother was able to balance her work and family, but ignoring child parenting, would make the child not maximum in their growth. For recommendation: it is suggested that the working mothers should maintain their quality time to interact with their children, as to conduct collaborative parenting with their husband, thus, to make a positive influence on children' growth.

### How to cite

Handayani, A., & Munawar, M. (2015). Work-Family Balanced and Quality of Parenting in Optimizing Children Development. *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education Studies*, 4(1), 11-18. doi:10.15294/ijeces.v4i1.9447

## INTRODUCTION

The age of *batita* (where a child is three years old and below) contributes significantly to the one achievement in the future (Phelps, 2013). Thus, to grow at best, inheritance factors (nature) from the parent, and environment (nurture) like nutrition, the birth process, treatment, environmental circumstances, psychosocial stimulus, education, early health, and treatment is having significant value.

To maximized the children growth at their golden age, they need a lot of stimulation from their environment particularly their parent. Their parent is their first interaction, especially mother. A close relationship with their mother is very important, despite the fact that that this is the age that there are many mothers who work, full time or part time. Thus, in Indonesia now dominated by those called "working mother and modern mother". They have characteristics as follows: 1) **Less time with their family, especially their children.** 2) Unwilling to breastfeed their children. 3) They do not have direct role upon their children for they are busy working thus it is delegated to their maid.

These circumstances result in poor interaction between mothers and their children, qualitatively and quantitatively. It is because the mother now replaces *ASI* (mother's milk) and their love with formulated milk that has different benefit, from the content of the nutrition and emotional and social bond between mothers and their children. Of course the quality parenting, which is now delegated to the maid, cannot be achieved in regard to maximum child growth. It is because the maid does not know of the proper early age child parenting. Whereas the growth of their brain, morale, and soul depends a lot on the intake of information and nutrition from the surrounding grown up.

Of course, these circumstances influence their growth especially if their mother work full time. But it doesn't mean that part-time working and non-working mother will have a maximum child grow.

There are two questions to ask in order to achieve child maximum growth. First, how is the quality of parenting gave for the children? Second, how capable is the working mother to balance between their family and work. Where there is a balance between family and work, then the maximum result is achievable.

Regarding the definition of work and family, the researchers have a different concept. In fact according to Frone (2003), dan Jones et al

(2006) balance between work and family is hard to define.

Initially, the work-family balance only refers to the concept of whether or not the conflict exist (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Clark, 2001; Saltztein dan Saltztein, 2001). According to Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), it is the first and most used concept in order to discuss work-family balance. Thus, at that, most of the literature about family discuss the work-family conflict.

The work-family conflict itself is defined as a form of role conflict, which the demand for work and family cannot be aligned in some matters (Greenhouse & Beutel, 1985). This conflict happened when someone attempts to fulfill the demand of work and it is influenced by one's ability to fulfill a family need. If both of them cannot be fulfilled then the conflict will emerge.

With the current development, then the absence of conflict is not enough to show a work-family balance (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007; Valcour; 2007). The concept of *work-family facilitation*, is the second component need considering regarding the consideration to indicate the presence of work-family balance (Grzywacz, & Mark, 2000; Frone, 2003; Voydanof, 2004). *Work-Family Facilitation* shows ability on one's role to increase ability in another role.

Another similar concept is proposed by Greenhouse & Powel, 2006; Carlson, et al, 2006, showing that the work-family balance is the absence of conflict or disturbance and the presence of enrichment and integration between work and family. further said that the balance between work and family will be achieved if the *work-family conflict* is in the lowest level and *work-family enrichment* is in the high category.

Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) argue that work-family balance rises from the positive and negative aspect of work-family interface. If the negative aspect always uses the concept of conflict (conflict), then the positive aspect uses some terms like, *work-family enrichment*, *work-family interface*, *work-family facilitation*, *positive family spillover* (Washington, 2006).

According to Voydanoff (2005), Greenhaus & Allen (2006) *work-family balance* is the condition where one feels the effectiveness and satisfaction in one's role in work and family, which suits his or her life scale priorities. This argument is similar with some proposed by another expert. Work-family balance is the presence of individual in the moment of same involvement and satisfaction in his or her role for work and family. 9marks and Mac Dermind, 1996); Greenhouse & Shaw, (2003) with the minimum conflict (Caldk, 2000;

Kirchmeyer, 2000).

Based on the above arguments, the conclusion can be drawn that work-life balance is when one's circumstances while he or she feel the similar involvement and satisfaction both in work and family domain, with minimal conflict, as the result of one's ability to determine the priority scale and committed to his or her own decision.

The children must live and grow in their family that is full of happiness, love, and understanding in order that their personality grows thoroughly and properly (The Opening of Children Right Convention). Each child has the right to their own parent parenting. Unless if there is a valid law to show that the separation from their parent is for the best of them and it is the ultimate consideration (Paragraph 14, act no 23, 2002, about child protection). Parent has an obligation to: 1) take care, raise, educate, and protect their children; 2) to develop their children according to their ability, talent, and interest; and 3) to prevent any early age marriage. Child parenting is a continuum of family parenting. The parenting from the other than their parent called alternative parenting.

Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Sindo News, 23/7/2013) stated that in order to increase the quality of child parenting, some approaching measured have been taken. 1) To develop children's appropriate municipal and town or KLA across the country. "It is lead to make cities and municipal including their surrounding and facilities could carry out its function as the facilities for family development and parenting for children of our nation, "2) To widen the education access for children, which one of them is by giving BOS (School Operational Support) and BSM (Poor Students Support). 3) To improve the health status of Indonesian children. 4) To give support and facilitation to many kinds of an innovative program aiming at increasing the wits, fitness, safety, and prosperity of Indonesian children. The child-friendly and caring Indonesia started from good family parenting.

A lot of research about early age child intervention had been done di many countries. The result of the study shows that parenting environment, parenting diet and family stimulate, influence the growth and development of children other than the factors of family, mother, child characteristic, and food consumption (Satoto, 1990).

Parent in general (especially mother) take care of their children with the patch up skill. A parent needs to gain more knowledge and skill of parenting from when their children were still at

an early age to monitor child growth. In order to improve the knowledge and attitude of the parent then the educational intervention, which combined the nutritional, health and parenting aspect is a need to be developed and conducted in order to maximize children growth. Patmonodewo (1993) also mention that any parent joining psychosocial intervention program will gain knowledge and skill regarding the child parenting. It will be done continuously thus the significant improvement appears in the aspect of knowledge and skill to be applied to their children in order to maintain the balanced relationship between mother and child.

According to Papalia & Old (1986), the mother has a significant role when the child is still a baby and pre-school age. It is valuable, the presence of mother of a child. Thus, the absence of mother for the children in quite a long time will cause *maternal deprivation*, means the feeling of lost for a close relationship between child and mother.

Madajinah (2003) also add those parents need to gain knowledge and skill of child parenting on early age to monitor the child growth. This knowledge and skill include feeding, health care, and interaction with mother and child. a parent who can stimulate the wits of their children is those who aware of their role to love and know what and how to provide children need thus it can stimulate the development of child education. Thus, the parent can stimulate child creativity or inhibit them.

The parenting patterns are the parenting practice and any interaction occurs between parent and child; this includes general parenting task and feeding pattern (Department of Health, 2005). Child parenting practice includes any necessity to make the child grows properly since birth, physically and mentally. The necessary parenting is providing adequate nutritious feeding to the child (breastfeeding, supplemental food, and after breastfeeding food), to protect the child from infectious disease (include the hygiene of the body, house, playground, child dining utensil), to do preventive and curative health care.

In addition, the parenting task also includes playing with children, monitoring, feeding, taking children to Posyandu (a community based monthly health service activity), taking children to the doctor, and father involvement. As for the feeding, the pattern includes diet planning, preparing the food, feeding, monitor schedule of the meal, meal utensil, introducing a new food, and mother's act of whether or not the children finish their food. (Madanijah, 2003).

The role of parent (mother) in parenting

task is very important, especially for the baby and baduta (child two years old and younger). They still depend on both physically and mentally to the grown up. UNICEF (1998) stressed out the important of parenting and treatment, dan placed poor child treatment as the third element, which causes the children to suffer from lack of nutrition, other than insufficient food and health service.

Dyadic is the nature of parenting pattern in this age. It means direct interaction between child and caretaker. Mother is the best caretaker, but another kind of caretaker can enrich child's experience. But the most important is secure parenting (Berk, 1997). The best parenting is done by mother and collaboration of mother and father. Regarding the mother's time allocation, not only the quantity aspect but also, the healthy child growth determined by the quality of parenting. The parent is demanded to provide not only quantity but also quality time. Mother, as the caretaker should have perception and responsiveness nature for the child, having the knowledge and skill about nutrition, health, parenting and recognize the concept of child growth. In this parenting process, there is an interaction between mother and child, which influence the nutritious status and growth of the child.

Growth is the increased size and number of cells and intercellular tissues, which mean the increment of physical size and body structure whole and part. They can be measured with height and weight quantifier (Department of Health, 2005). Growth is the increment of more complex structure and body function in the ability of rough motion, smooth motion, speech, language and socialization and independence (Department of Health, 2005). Growth happens simultaneously with development. Unlike growth, development is the result of central neuron interaction with the affected organ, like the neuromuscular system, speech ability, emotional, and socialization. All of them have important roles in complete human life (Department of Health).

Generally, the child has normal growth and development resulting from the interaction of many factors which influence growth and development (Department of Health, 2005). The factors are an internal factor from within individual themselves, and external factors from outside individual or environment. Internal factors are like race/ethnic, family, age, gender, and genetic. External factor come into effect are prenatal, during birth, and after birth.

The prenatal factor, which influence growth and development are nutrition, abnormal

fetus position, toxic, endocrine, radiation, infection, immunologic disorder, anoxia embryo (embryo placenta disorder) and mother's psychology. The affected birth process is a birth complication, which could cause a brain disorder. The after birth factors, which give influence is nutrition, chronic illness, physical environment (child and surrounding relationship), endocrine, social-economical (poverty always related to poor intake of food which can inhibit child growth), parenting environment, a stimulant for child growth and development, and medicine.

Child growth and development runs in order, interrelated and continues. It was started from the womb and adult. Child growth and development are divided into periods. Based on references from Department of Health (2005) then the child growth and development periods are as follows: a. **Prenatal periods or Intrauterine (pregnancy).**

In order that fetus grows and develop into healthy child, during the pregnancy, the mother is expected to: 1) Maintain her health, 2) Be in the happiest environment, 3) **Has healthy nutritional intake**, 4) Regularly do health checking, 5) Give early stimulus to the fetus, 6) Do not suffer from poor love, 7) To avoid stress, physically and mentally, 8) Do any hard work; b. **Infancy.** Age 0 – 11 years; c. **Age of Balita (age 12-59 months).** in this age, the speed of growth started slowing and there is progress in child motoric movement (rough and smooth) and excretion function.; d. **Pra school age (60 – 72 month).**

In this age, the growth is in stable condition. There is some growth in the function of thinking and skills. Not only at home but also child is introduced to the environment around the house. The child starts enjoying to play outside the house with their friends. Thus for the progress of a child at the age of 0 - 36 month used in this research referred to Ministry of Education act no 58 2009 about early age educational standard.

Basically, the best parenting is from the mother and collaboration of mother and father. Regarding the time allocation, not only quantitative aspect but also, the child growth is influenced by the quality of parenting.

According to Papalia and Old (1986) mother has a significant role when the child is still baby and pre-school. The presence of the mother to the child is very necessary. Thus, the absence of mother to a child for a long time will rise *maternal deprivation*.

Salimar's result of research (2011) shows that mother workload can influence the quality of parenting for balita (0-5 years old). Thus, a

mother who prefer the role of working women rather than a housewife, the child could grow optimum. This happens because of the less time with the children. The mother rarely gives stimulation to the children.

According to Soetjningsih and Ekawati (Salima, 2011), a child with guided and regular stimulation would grow faster than those who aren't. This results positively to their psychosocial, which is expected to be better.

Then it can be inferred that some working mother, whose children are poor attention, usually cannot optimally grow. This is because the less time for the child which makes the parenting quality is not maximal. If the child is being taken care of, ignorance of their growth and development, then their growth and development will not run optimally. It can be said that the presence of interaction between mother and child in the long term can influence child growth.

Thus, the objective of this research was to describe supporting and inhibiting factor of child growth especially in regard to the balance between family work – and parenting quality.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is using qualitative research, which refers to the naturalistic paradigm. This naturalistic paradigm comes from phenomenology. It tries to understand human nature from the side of from the talking frame and action toward others.

This kind of research conducted procedure, which later produce descriptive data in the form or words taken from observational result interview, document translation, blue tape, about the balance in family work and quality of parenting to optimize child growth.

This research was done in 3 months, started from January–April 2014. The location of the research was in PAUD (Early age education) in Semarang. The subject of this research were 15 working parents (mother) whose children study in PAUD. The characteristic of those women is, working, either formal or informal and having 3 years old less child.

The data collection, recording, and data analysis are done integrally based on the research model Spradley. The procedure collects data into three steps which are:

- 1) Descriptive observation
- 2) Focus observation
- 3) Chosen observation

While the analysis including 1) domain analysis, 2) taxonomic analysis, 3) componen-

tial analysis and 4) thematic analysis. The data collection and analysis are done integrally and to follow cyclical stage.

The data collected include the data of child growth and development, the parenting given by mother/caretaker to a child at the age of 0-36 month, and the balance between job and family. the data collection is done by observation for 1 month and interview to the mother/ substitute caretaker through the list of open question to support the validity of research data.

The data collected through the interview, observation and document analysis is taken in the form of Field Note and analyzed continuously. The first analysis was done by coding, which is done by giving the same code of certain occurred phenomenon. This useful to ease the counting of the phenomenon emergence; the code for emergency frequency shows the trend of the finding; it help to arrange the categories and subcategories. For the procedure of the next analysis is done based on research procedure from Spradley. They are domain analysis, taxonomy, component and thematic (Moleong, 2004).

The checking of data validity was done after the data had gone through the analysis process. The data validity technique could be done in some ways like, 1) participation extension, 2) the perseverance of observation, 3) triangulation, 4) member checking, 5) reference adequateness, 6) negative case studies, 7) peer checking, and 8) audit (Moleong, 2000). In this research, four ways were used to check the validity of data. They are perseverance of observation, triangulation, reference adequateness, and negative case studies.

Based on the research objective stated, the data is described and analyzed by domain analysis in this part respectively: 1) family work balance, 2) the data about supporting factors for child growth regarding work-family balance and quality of parenting; 3) the data about factor that inhibit the child growth and development regarding the work-family balance and child parenting quality.

### 1. Family work balance

In regard to the family work balance, the result of the research shows that there are three categories of family work balance regarding the child parenting; a) the mother is able to balance the aspect of work and family, and feel satisfy for there is assistance from a husband or another member of the family. b) the mother can balance between the aspect of work and family but feel exhausted because of that burden, c) the mother should be able to balance aspect of work and family but ignorance about child parenting. The

child care is substituted by the maid even if the mother is at home.

2. The supporting factor of child growth and development regarding the work-family balance and the quality of parenting.

Based on the result of the research on working mother, the child growth could be achieved optimally through the good quality of parenting, which is done as follows: 1) collaboration/delegation of role of mother and father in parenting and taking care of household activity; 2) the good communication on parenting between mother and father; 3) the perception alignment for child parenting between school and parent, 4) the alignment between child parenting pattern between the substitute care take and parent, 5) mother and father spend their time after work to play with the children, 6) parent understanding about child growth and development, 7) one commitment in applying democratic parenting, 8) active dialog between child and parent about child activities, 9) parent give limitation to child behaviour, 10) to provide educative toys (APE), 11) parent/caretaker support regarding child need for socialization with their peers.

This condition usually achieved from the first type of the mother, which is a mother who is able to balance between the aspect or work and family, and feel satisfy for there is assistance from husband and another family member in child parenting.

The factors inhibiting child growth and development regarding the work-family balance and parenting quality.

Based on the result of the research on working mother, there are some inhibiting factor for child growth and development; 1) There are no collaboration between father and mother in stimulating child and cover the household task; 2) There is no communication about parenting between father and mother; 3) the difference parenting pattern between mother and substitute caretaker; 4) the mother focused on household task after work; 5) the mother and substitute caretaker are very tired (age); 6) lack of knowledge about child growth and development; 7) the mother only watch over the children while doing household task; 8) the mother carries the child while finishing the household task; 9) the parent unsupportive about child socializing with their peers; 10) poor communication with the child; 11) poor interaction between parent and child (playing); 12) Stimulation only on one dominant aspect; 13) to facilitate child want without any limitation like watching TV, or playing game.

Some mother tends to focus too much on

finishing household task after work thus, the parenting is done by a) keep using the substitute caretaker; b) only watching the child while finishing household task (parent do not spend their time interacting with children); c) to let the child watching TV or playing game while the mother does household task (as long as the kids do not make trouble); d) to carry the child while the mother finishes the household task.

This conditions usually happens to mother type two and three in the category of work-family balance. The mother is able to balance between the aspect of work and family but feels too tired for doing all of the tasks and the mother should be able to balance between the aspect of work and family but ignorance of child parenting.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basically, the best parenting is done by the mother herself, and parent (mother and father). Regarding the time allocation, it is not only about an aspect of quantity, but also the quality of parenting. But, with the current condition, where there are so many working mothers to help family earning or to develop themselves.

Nevertheless, if the mother is able to balance her role at work and family, then the child growth will be optimum. It is like stated by milkie, et al (2010) that the interaction with the child is the quality time between mother and child, like playing together, indoor or outdoor, chat and read the child some story.

In this case, the support from the husband or another family member is needed to help ease the mother's burden as the consequence of her double role. As stated by Milkie and Pelto (1999) that mother must keep with "women" duty like cooking, clean up, childcare, and shopping. As such, with the collaboration between mother(wife) and father (husband) will reduce the stress level regarding the parenting responsibility (Ehrenberg, 2010). The same opinion proposed by Gordon et al (2004) that the husband contribution is needed in a family with working mother, especially those with early age children.

The Salimar result of research (2011) shows that mother's workload affect the quality of parenting on *balita*. The mother's workload without any help, especially from the husband, and in general from the member of the family will cause minimum body stimulant causing poor quality of parenting.

Basically, it is important for mother and father to collaboratively do parenting and do the household task, with the good commitment and

communication regarding the parenting pattern and school, and the presence of dialog and time together for parent and children to play. All of them are supporting factors of quality parenting that can be done by working mothers to achieves the optimum child growth and development.

As stated by Soetjiningsih and Ekawati (Walimar, 2011) that children who get guided and regular stimulation will grow faster compare to those who don't. Giving repeated and continuous on every aspect means giving the child opportunity to grow and develop optimally (Soetjiningsih, 1995).

Thus, optimum stimulation for child growth and development is the challenge of working mother for children is the mandate for a parent. There are some cases of mothers who are not balanced in her aspect of work and family. In this case, she cares more about work, and less care about her child growth, thus her child growth is not optimum. It is caused by too little time give for the child, which make the poor quality of parenting.

Another circumstances like there are no collaboration between mother and father in child stimulation and doing the household task. Mother focuses too much on doing household task after work; the mother and substitute caretaker are too tired (maybe because of age); lack of knowledge about child growth, including no limitation of facilitating the children to watch TV or play gadget, those factors mention could inhibit the child growth.

This condition happens because there is no support at role delegation between father and mother after work both in child parenting and household task. Thus, the mother workload then to be heavier for she has to take care of the house after work. Such situation, of course, does not supportive to child growth and development.

The parent who is to tire after work, lacks knowledge about child growth and development, causing them to refuse to chat, play, or accompany the children with their peers. The absence of communication and alignment of parenting pattern between mother and substitute caretaker. Those mentioned are the inhibiting factors of child growth, for there is no assistance from the husband, and poor quality of parenting causing the child growth and development to be not optimum.

Based on the result of the test, then the substantive theory is devised as follows:

“if working mother aware of the supporting factors of good parenting

quality; the delegation of role between mother and father in parenting and household task; the presence of commitment and good communication regarding the parenting and child growth and development between mother, father, substitute caretaker and school, and the presence of dialog/ interaction dan playing time with mother and father, then the mother has applied the balance of work and family in order that the child could achieve optimum growth.”

## CONCLUSION

The result of the research showed: a) when the mother is able to balance between work and family, and feel satisfy for there is assistance from the husband, the child growth can be optimum, b) when the mother is able to balance between the aspect of work and family, but feel to tired for her double role, then the child growth cannot be optimum, for there is no support or collaboration from husband regarding the parenting, c) the mother should be able to balance the aspect or work and family but ignoring child parenting, will cause not optimum in the child growth and development.

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