



Closeness of Late Adolescents' in Javanese Families: A Qualitative Study of Parent-Child Relation

Agustin Erna Fatmasari* & Niken Fatimah Nurhayati²

¹Universitas Diponegoro (Psychology, Undip, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia)

²Universitas Diponegoro (Psychology, Undip, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia)

Corresponding Author: Fatmasari, Agustin Erna E-mail:erna.fatmasari@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Submitted: May 14th, 2022

Accepted: July 28th, 2022

Published: September 15th, 2022

KEYWORDS

Parent-child relation,
closeness, Javanese,
Qualitative study.

ABSTRACT

Closeness is a quality predictor of a harmonious parent-child relationship. Closeness demonstrates a mutually influencing parent-child relationship involving physical, mental and emotional aspects. This research aims to explore the dynamic of closeness in parent-child relationships between parents and their late adolescents' sons and daughters in Javanese families. The research uses qualitative method through a thorough interview. Research respondents were six late adolescents' in their undergraduate studies of which were selected based on the fulfillment of criteria. The qualitative analysis uses a phenomenologis perspective. The research results show the strongest reasons for being close to their fathers are because fathers are understanding, caring, and guiding. The strongest reasons for being close to their mothers are because they are understanding, caring and accompanying. Fathers-mothers understand and care based on the father-mother role in Javanese families, referred to as asih, fathers guide (asah), and because mothers accompany (asuh). Closeness with fathers occurs more in informal and recreational activities, whereas closeness with mothers are related to household tasks. The interesting findings of this study are an external condition that influence parent child relation to be closer or otherwise. External condition that influence closeness are parent approach to their children, technological advancement, differences in vision in choosing a partner, and unfortunate experiences with one parent.

INTRODUCTION

A person's life only has meaning with the presence of others. One form of relationship for a person to create relations is a blood relationship to create a family (Adams et al., 2001) Families are where children first grow and develop under their parents' guidance. Family members interact with one another in carrying out each of their function and roles. In reality, a lot of unharmonious interactions occur in family relations. Physical abuse in Italy is considered normal, especially in low-income families with young disobedient children (Amanda, 2018) in China does not only happen between husbands and wives, but also in parent-child relationships (Andriyani, 2018) There are a lot of examples of disharmony in Indonesia, a father abusing his wife and children (Irmawati, 2013) a mother abandoning her children (Bardi & Borgognini-Tarli, 2001) a child rebelling against their parents (Boutelle et al., 2009) or even murder of another family member (Breuk et al., 2007) Family issues like abusing, abandoning, or even

murder of another family member are often considered unimportant, domestic issues. However, a harmonious parent-child relationships is capable of predicting the close relations a child would build in their future (Susilo et al., 2019) preventing juvenile delinquency (Clark & Ivankova, 2015) providing a conducive environment for a child's mental health (Crockett et al., 2007) improving welfare (Reis & Sprecher, 2009) ability to social (Sandarwati, 2014) and psychologically adapt (Fitriadi, 2013) adolescent emotional functions and dignity (Ge et al., 2009) as well as implanting moral values (Gemelli, 2008) The closeness built is a predictor of parent-child relations quality (Oster & Crone, 2004) Closeness is an important component in the existence of a human being. A person will build close relations all their life, in parent-child relations, friendships, and romantic relationships. Close parent-child relationships is the most stable and life-lasting close relationship, compared to friendship and romantic relationships that come and go with time. Parent-child relationships will be filled with love and care, as well as irritation, anger, guilt, hatred, and jealousy. However, a parent-child relationship bond will always make its mark, even when both parents have passed away. Parent-child closeness is defined more as an emotional condition than a physical concept (Golish, 2000) Children will still feel close without physical contact because their parents have become part of their mental scheme the child's personality (Bush-Bailey, 2019) Children in this research are late adolescent attending college as a student. The focus of the research is close relationships between late adolescent and their parents because late adolescent require parental support and guidance as a key to successfully transition into an independent adult (M A Hakim & Supriyadi, 2012) especially in facing pressuring life experiences (Mochammad Abdul Hakim et al., 2012) Disharmonious relationships with parents will cause adolescent to find love and intimacy outside of the family (Han & Waldfogel, 2007)

This research will use an *indigenous psychology* approach to further understand the close relationship dynamics between adolescent and their parents. A culture can only be properly understood by the local society (HANUM, 2003) not by outsider (Hwang, 2000) An approach to Javanese family cultures is used because the Javanese ethnicity is the largest in Indonesia (Kim et al., 2010) The research goal to explore the dynamic of closeness in parent-child relationships between parents and their late adolescents' sons and daughters in Javanese families, especially the reasons for the closeness, and further discovering forms of closeness and factors influencing closeness within a family interaction, between a mother-father and their late adolescents' son-daughter. The research results is hoped to provide an understanding illustrating the relations when a child interacts with their parents and to also help readers improve the quality of parent-child relationships, how to interact and form closeness between parents and children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Closeness

This research will focus more on closeness because it better portrays a reciprocal relationship. A reciprocal relationship is one of mutual influence between parents and children (Kong & Lim, 2012) The reciprocal relationship pattern is characterized into positive reciprocal relationships (Masche, 2010) and negative reciprocal relationships (Lai, 2011) Forms of closeness are evident through openness in communication, understanding, love and respect, both from the child to their parents or from the parents to their children (Lestari & Kim, n.d.) parental supervision of their children's activities (PUTRI, 2019) as well as acceptance and support felt by the children to be independent from their parents (Prabowo & Aswanti, 2014) Closeness is marked with cohesion, friendship, intimacy, trust, care, and open communication (COMMED, 2016) Forming close parent-child relations depend on the culture and philosophy practiced as tradition in where a person lives (Purnama & Wahyuni, 2017) Traditional cultural values teach families in China to repress conflict by emphasizing on obedience and respect to the elderly to improve cohesiveness and form close feelings between family members (Putri, 2005) Families in Mexico emphasize on closeness and dependency on families. Culture values reflecting such things are

familismo (Qin et al., 2012) and *respecto* (QONITATIN, 2019) Families in Europe emphasize on independence, warm atmospheres, intimacy, and free emotional expressions in creating closeness (Repinski & Zook, 2005) Indonesian culture share similarities with Chinese culture in that it emphasizes harmony and dependency in families. Harmony in family is signified by shared feelings of happiness and sadness, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect (Roest et al., 2010)

Social Changes in Parent-Child Relations

Social changes in several fields cause shifts from traditional values to modern values, especially with regard to a child's relationship with their parents. Values used in families tend to be new (modern), egalitarian values (Rohde et al., 2003) Growing equality between men and women encourages for more *sharing*, exchange of thoughts, as well as an increased involvement of fathers in nurturing children that did not exist in the previous generation (Shahid et al., 2013) In family life, men and women have different roles and behaviours that complement one another (Froh et al., 2009) Working parents may leave home early and return late, reducing interaction time with children, or families with members working out-of-town only have the weekends to spend together (Medic, 2008) Parents being busy finding income will reduce closeness and supervision of their children. Parents' knowledge of their children's activities outside of home are limited allowing room for risky adolescent behavior (Syakarofath & Subandi, 2019) Parental involvement in parenting also can increase adolescent juvenile (Taris & Semin, 1997) aggressive behavior (Tartono, 2009) and also disruptive behavior (Miller-Day, 2004) finding that external dimension there are condition of the environment may influence in parent-child relation. Three condition refers to physical distant, another relation, and teknologi. Parents and child mostly doing activities with their gadget (van Wel et al., 2002) so the directly communication will be decreasing (Prasanti, 2016)

Gender and Closeness

The research will also discuss the level of close parent-child relationships based on gender. Adolescence in Mexico (Crockett, et al., 2007) and in Europe feel closer to their mothers than their fathers (Rohde, et al., 2003). Adolescence also trust their mothers more than their fathers (Scharf & Mayseless, 2008; Lestari, Faturochman, & Kim, 2011; Hakim, Thontowi, Yuniarti, & Kim, 2012). Adolescence will come when they need something and trust their secrets to their mothers (Scharf & Mayseless, 2008). Children's trust in Javanese culture based on the "ngemong" concept of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (in Hakim, Thontowi, et al., 2012), include *asih* (caring), *asuh* (taking care, nurturing, supervising, and ensuring the child develops well), and *asah* (educating and being a role model) in parents nurturing their children. Fathers play a major role in *asah*, whereas mothers are responsible for *asih* and *asuh* (Hakim, Thontowi, et al., 2012). Children trust and are closer to people they have emotional ties with (Hakim, Thontowi, et al., 2012). Children feel comforted, togetherness, entertained, and happy when close to their mothers. Children show more admiration and respect to their fathers only for what they have done for the family (Hakim, Supriyadi, et al., 2011). Children's trust towards their parents will improve emotional closeness with children (Hakim, Thontowi, et al., 2012). The stereotype in society is that daughters have strong, sturdy ties with their mothers. Daughters feel close to their mothers, sons also feel closer to their mothers than to their fathers. However, the close ties between a daughter and a mother is stronger than that between a father and son (Golish, 2000). Relationships with mothers are closer and tighter than that with fathers, also allowing more conflict to happen with mothers (Scharf & Mayseless, 2008). Roest, Dubas, and Gerris (2010) provide a different perspective, closeness can also be formed across genders. Delegation of responsibility is done by fathers to their daughters, from mothers to their sons.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research uses a qualitative phase through a thorough interview to collect the data (Creswell & Clark, 2014). Research respondents were six late adolescents' in their undergraduate studies of which were selected for the qualitative phase based on the fulfillment of criteria. Respondents are selected by using the *nonprobability sampling* technique of *purposive sampling* to select respondents based on determined characteristics (Sugiyono, 2012). Respondents for the interview have to fulfill the following criteria of currently taking undergraduate studies aged 17-24 years old, are close with their fathers/mothers, coming from Javanese families, and residing in Semarang, 6 respondents were selected.

Data Analysis and Data Interpretation Method

The qualitative analysis uses a phenomenologis perspective. The researcher began analyzing the obtained research results by reading the interview transcripts to identify emerging themes, making a research result transcript, coding to gain the main idea of the research, and re-reading the data and analysis notes in order.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the analysis data discovered two big themes about parent-child relation, here the table:

Table 1. Theme of Parent-Child Relation

Theme	Category
Form of Closeness	<i>Closeness between Daughters-Fathers</i>
	<i>Closeness between Sons-Mothers</i>
	<i>Closeness between Sons-Fathers</i>
	<i>Closeness between Daughters-Mothers</i>
Condition that Influence	<i>External</i>
	<i>Internal</i>

Form of Closeness

Closeness between Daughters-Fathers

Closeness form of an understanding from father, like invite joked that children are not angry anymore and caution in giving feedback. Father guiding more about the future, especially related to education. Togetherness with father such as culinary tourism, sports, and recreation. Factors influencing close relationships between daughters and fathers include the death of a parent or the presence of a new family member, as well as televisions put in each of the children's, parent's and relative's rooms, restricting the time they meet.

Two out of three female respondents feel close to their fathers, which are respondents BL and ZA, proven by the following statement:

"Well I feel closer to my dad than my mom. Because my dad takes care of me and we're very close...." (BL-I, 64-69; 231-232)

"When my family was still complete, I actually felt closer to my father" (ZA, 4-5).

Closeness between Sons-Mothers

Forms of closeness between sons and mothers are understanding, attention, and togetherness. Mothers can understand the nature, needs, and desires of the child so as to give appropriate attention.

The love of a mother makes her sacrifice so great for the sake of the children. Together with a mother like, shopping, prayer, eat, and watch favorite shows together. Factors influencing close relationships between sons and mothers are differences in vision in choosing a partner and unfortunate experiences with their fathers. Unfortunate experiences may occur due to a father's tough personality, parents separating, and a parent's work schedule that limits the time they spend together. The same applies for the qualitative phase findings, two out of three male respondents feel closer to their mothers. The following are statements by AB and KK:

"I'm closer to my mother so I interact with my mother more... sometimes my mother drops by my room to talk, share stories." (AB-I, 38-40).

"...I see my mother everyday, so it's more comfortable, I'm closer with my mother and sometimes my mother can be adorable too...hahaha" (KK-I, 161-163).

Closeness between Sons-Fathers

Forms of closeness with father are understanding and togetherness. Understanding of the way a father looks at ease with a child, treated like a friend so that children feel a lot of similarities (sex, nature, hobbies) and comfortably to exchange ideas. Fathers better understand, accept, and encourage positive wishes of children compared to mothers. Togetherness with fathers, such as clean and repair homes, repairing cars and motorcycles, joking, and talking. Factors influencing close relationships are a father's humorous personality and differences of opinion with mothers.

Closeness between Daughters-Mothers

Forms of closeness between daughter and mother look of understanding, attention, trust, intensive in communication, openness, and togetherness. Mother familiar with friends and hang of the child, establish intensive communication so that children can open and trusting to share about everything. Togetherness with mothers related maternal household activities such as shopping and cooking together while talking. Factors influencing close relationships between daughters and mothers, aside from revered father figures, is also because a father's workplace is far and often moves around, so children spend more time with their mothers. The findings contradict Rohde, et al. (2003)'s research results that children are closer to parents of the same gender with them, compared to parents of different gender. Roest, et al. (2010) has a different view on parent-child interaction where parent-child interaction is not only dominated by family members of the same gender. In the values socialization process, interactions across genders can also occurs, allowing the formation of close relationship between fathers and their daughters-sons. Social change, with more mothers working, will increase the possibility of fathers being more involved in nurturing. In fulfilling the role of complementing one another, nurturing is no longer dominated by mothers (Hanum, 2003). Fathers are no longer mere breadwinners, but also help mothers nurture and educate children (Gemelli, 2008). The next discovery is that the strongest reason for being close with their fathers- mothers, for both sons and daughters, is because fathers and mothers understand their children. During the interview, respondents both male and female also reveal that the reason they are close to their parents is mainly because they understand and love their children. Sons and daughters who are close to their fathers-mothers feel that fathers-mothers understand and know their children well, allowing for a better approach and attention given to the child. Children can trust their fathers-mothers enough to share stories and exchange thoughts. Sharing a lot of similarities is also a reason why children feel their fathers-mothers understand them. The second reason is that fathers-mothers love their children. Children know when they are loved and cared for and the sacrifices their fathers-mothers have made to build a sense of comfort, protection, happiness, and to always feel close. The third strongest reason sons and daughters feel close to their fathers is because fathers are guiding, whereas the third strongest reason for mothers is because they like to keep their children company. This

finding is different compared to prior research conducted by Hakim, Thontowi, et al. (2012) that fathers in Javanese families play a major role in *asah*, whereas mothers are responsible for *asih* and *asuh*. This finding shows that both fathers and mothers of Javanese families are equally capable of carrying out *asih*, evident by the first and second reasons for closeness to fathers and mothers, both in sons and daughters, are because their fathers and mothers are understanding and loving. The difference in findings emphasizes on the father's role in *asah* (fathers guide), and the mother's role in *asuh* (mothers keep children company). Guiding fathers portrays a father's role, especially in giving direction and educating their children. Mothers being the one keeping the children company portrays the mother's role in always being there and setting aside more time to be with their children. Children closer to mother (Prabowo & Aswanti, 2014), because mother can give emotional comfort to their child (Purnama & Wahyuni 2017).

To daughters, guiding fathers are in accordance with a father's role in directing and educating. Father's guidance is evident through the directions he gives in relation to the child's education, such as which university to choose and what sort of future it would provide, and also from the rules he sets to control his child, as well as teaching between what is right and what is wrong. Absence of a father's decision causes restlessness in children. To sons, guiding fathers are in accordance with the father's role in motivating and becoming a role model. Respondents states that they follow their father's behavior and reactions when facing a problem. Fathers always accept and support their children's every decision. Fathers give their children trust to determine their own life as long as the choice is good and will support it. A guiding father means accepting and supporting independence. Fathers do not direct too much, but act more as role models by demonstrating how to behave as a good person. When with their daughters, fathers tend to cause children to be dependent, when with sons, fathers tend to teach them independence. To daughters, mothers keeping them company means mothers are always there for her children. Mothers are always present when her children need her, to share and confide in, also would come to her mother when facing troubles as well as when she is happy. It is her mother that she thinks of. To sons, mothers keeping them company means that a mother is willing to be at home, accompanying, and with the child, allowing for a higher intensity of encounters. In line with Putri and Himam (2005)'s findings that a mother would even set aside her career to spend more time being with and caring for their children. Forms of closeness generally created between parents and their sons or daughters are openness in communication, children feeling understood, mutually loving and trusting, attention and supervision given by parents to their children, as well as acceptance and support for decisions children make. This finding is in accordance with a prior research that closeness can be seen from understanding (Taris & Semin, 1995), love, honest and respectful communication, emotional self-revelation to parents (Golish, 2000), parental supervision (Breuk, et al., 2007), as well as acceptance and support that children receive from their parents to become independent (Scharf & Mayseless, 2008). Closeness to mothers tend to involve with housework activities like going to the market, shopping together, cooking together, and eating together. Closeness to fathers tend to in involve more informal and recreational activities like visiting tourist locations, eating out, doing sports together, fixing motorcycles and cars, as well as going around the neighborhood.

Different forms of closeness are created between daughters and mothers. A mother's great understanding, love given, and mutual trust allows daughters to frankly confide in everything to their mothers. This open and honest communication is not found in relationships between fathers and his sons or daughters, or between sons and mothers. They communicate while still withholding certain information, only discussing education openly but not other topics unless specifically asked. Even when asked, they choose to remain silent in consideration of their parent's feelings, for example on topics regarding relationships with close friends (lovers).

Condition that Influence Parent-Child Relation

The interesting findings of this study are an external and internal condition that influence parent-child relation to be closer or otherwise. External condition that influence closeness are technological advancement such as televisions put in each of the children's also parent's and relative's rooms as well as ATMs allow transfer of money over long distances in a short period of time. Then, internal condition are parent approach to their children, differences in vision in choosing a partner, and unfortunate experiences with one parent. Factors influencing close relationships between parent-child is in accordance with a prior research, due to the death of a parent or the presence of a new family member, the passing of one parent (Golish, 2000), physical distances, work and schedules (Han & Waldfogel, 2007). Further more, this research finding that technological advancement also influences distance between parent-child, by having a television in each child's room will cause children, using gadget, parents and other relatives to rarely see each other and decrease physically of closeness. Especially by using gadget can influence parent-child relation (Qonitatin, 2019). Parents and child mostly doing activities with their gadget (Andriyani, 2018), as the result communication between parent-child will be affected, decreasing day by day (Prasanti, 2016). As well, ATMs allow transfer of money over long distances in a short period of time. When sons want to ask for pocket money, this technological advancement allows transfer of money without needing to see each other. Differences in vision in choosing a partner and unfortunate experiences also influences distance between parent-child in this research. Changes in closeness can occur when maturing children find life partners that usually contradict their mother's choice. Unfortunate experiences may occur due to a father's tough personality causing children to be closer to their mothers. Differences in opinion often occur with mothers also a mother's harsh and angry personality causing children to be closer to their fathers.

CONCLUSION

The results discovered that the strongest reasons for being close to their fathers are because fathers are understanding, caring, and guiding. The strongest reasons for being close to their mothers are because they are understanding, caring and accompanying. Fathers-mothers understand and care based on the father-mother role in Javanese families, referred to as *asih*, fathers guide (*asah*), and because mothers accompany (*asuh*). Closeness with fathers occurs more in informal and recreational activities, whereas closeness with mothers are related to household tasks. Closeness to fathers tend to include more informal and recreational activities such as visiting tourist locations, eating out, doing sports together, fixing motorcycles and cars, going around the neighborhood. Closeness to mothers tend to include time spent together going to the market, shopping together, cooking together, and eating together. The interesting findings of this study are an external and internal condition that influence parent child relation to be closer or otherwise. External condition that influence closeness are technological advancement (televisions put in each of the children's, parent's and relative's rooms as well as ATMs allow transfer of money over long distances in a short period of time). Internal condition are parent approach to their children, differences in vision in choosing a partner, and unfortunate experiences with one parent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all of the participant and the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro because this article is one of the outputs of research with non-APBN funding, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This article clearly to fulfill as output of research activities funded by Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro.

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