

## The Asmat Tribe's Perception of Parenting Style (Anthropological Studies with a Qualitative Approach)

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### Abstract

This study discusses the perception of the Asmat Tribe of parenting style (anthropological studies with a qualitative approach). This research was conducted in Asmat Regency in four villages (Damen, Warse, Akamar, and Birak) from September to December 2019. The research method used was qualitative with descriptive analysis. The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary. Researchers carried out data collection by primary data collection with Independent Interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), direct observation and interviews with the stakeholders. The findings of this research are as follows: a) the perception of the Asmat Tribe about the role of children is not correct; b) the perceptions of Asmat Tribe about child ownership is low where parents give freedom to their children in various ways.

**Keywords:** parenting, Asmat tribe, perception

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia, the country with the most significant economic growth in Southeast Asia, is at a crossroads. Increasing state prosperity and decreasing poverty rates put the world's fourth most populous country on track to provide the best future generations at the start of its life. However, with a third of children under five suffering from stunting in 2018, it is becoming difficult for Indonesia to seize opportunities. Indonesia is among the five countries with the highest incidence of stunting in the world. The country recognizes that the rate is in the "crisis" stage. Stunting (high for low age), or chronic malnutrition, results from low nutrition and poor health in early childhood, starting in the womb [1; 2]. Stunted children never grow to their ideal height and never reach their cognitive development potential. Stunting not only limits individual potential but also limits the nation's capital. Therefore, Indonesia strives to reduce stunting in children to ensure the nation thrives and prosper in the 21st century by increasing equality of opportunity for all.

Minister of Health Nila Moeloek, in a Cabinet meeting on April 8 2018, emphasized that stunting is a concern of the government (which worries the government, but parents/mothers are normal. So what is essential to build is parental awareness of what stunting is and its impact because those who suffer from stunting will be giving birth to children who will also suffer from stunting [3]. It is what triggers a vicious cycle of stunting. Stunting has a negative impact not only on health but on economic growth and human development, "said Sardjoko, Deputy Minister for Human and Social and Cultural Development at Bappenas. The short toddler is one of the nutritional problems experienced by toddlers in the world today. In 2017 22.2% or around 150.8 million children under five in the world are stunted [4].

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One country that has succeeded in reducing stunting rates is Peru. The stunted children rate has almost halved in less than a decade. It was from about 28 per cent in 2008 to about 13 per cent in 2016. It was taken place because of a sizeable multi-sectoral nutrition boost partially. Another critical feature of Peru's success is convincing policymakers, public officials and parents of the importance of early childhood interventions to encourage them to overcome malnutrition and make them recognize chronic malnutrition as a problem [5]. Peru launched a successful national communications campaign on stunting. Meanwhile, until this year, Indonesia's state has not succeeded in reducing the stunting rate properly. Every year, it tends to decrease, but the rate of decline is not so significant.

There are several areas that focus on the problem of stunting, namely South Kalimantan, West and Central Kalimantan, NTB, Maluku, South Sulawesi, Aceh, West Sulawesi, NTT and Papua. However, this research will only focus on stunting in Papua, specifically in Asmat Regency. The stunting incidence will be reviewed from the point of view of the parenting style in the area. The reasons for choosing Papua as an area that is focused on Papua, because seen from the Percentage of Women of Fertile Age (WFA) and Pregnant Women at Risk of Chronic Energy Deficiency (CED) in Indonesia in 2017, which can increase the stunting ratio, Papua is the highest area. The results of observations made by WVI during November - December 2018 indicate that: a) the quality of the weighing data is deficient; b) underweight children around 40%; and c) chronic and acute nutritional problems.

It is in line with the findings of the 2018 Riskesdas, which reported that Papua is a province with a prevalence of undernutrition compared to other provinces in Indonesia. Overcoming stunting must start from the awareness of the family's understanding of the importance of parenting. The family is an early institution in the child's life and is considered the closest institution to children because families have a longer time with children. It can be interpreted that the family has a significant share in child development [6; 7]. Nutritional conditions influence children's growth and development since the mother is pregnant, breastfeeding until the child is two years old, often referred to as the first 1000 days of life (1000 HPK). The parenting styles of the parents very much influence the development of children [8; 9].

Several factors must be considered in caring for children, including 1) parents' perceptions of child ownership; 2) parents' perceptions about the role of children in the family; 3) parents' perceptions of local food resources; 4) parents' perceptions of environmental sanitation; 5) parents' perceptions of access to health services; 6) the ability of the parents from an economic point of view. The problem of malnutrition in children under five has been a public health problem since long ago [10; 11]. The availability of foodstuffs in the family is limited, which in the end has the potential to cause malnutrition and even malnutrition. Apart from that, poor environmental and sanitation conditions exacerbate malnutrition and inadequate health facilities and services.

Malnutrition is a significant factor in the death of infants and toddlers. Generally, nutritional problems are caused by two main factors: disease infection and low nutritional intake due to insufficient food availability at the household level or misguide parenting. Toddlers are one of the groups that are vulnerable to health problems because toddlers have very rapid growth and development process. Toddlers also tend to have difficulty eating and insufficient nutrient intake [12; 13]. In low-income families, low income causes food shortages in the household, leading to the low quantity and quality of food given to babies and children and lack of food access. We need an understanding starting from the family and the importance of child development because children access the nation's future and family wealth.

Based on the background described above, this problem is further broken down into several problem formulations: a) What is the Asmat people's perception about children's role in the family? Furthermore, b) How do the Asmat people perceive child ownership?

## 2. Method

The research study's location and time on parents' perceptions of parenting in the family were located in Asmat / Papua province in four villages. The research took place from September to December 2019. The research was following this study's purpose: to know parents' parenting styles towards children in the family using qualitative methods with descriptive analysis. Sources of data used in this study are primary and secondary data sources. In this study, the primary data sources were parents having children, while secondary data was obtained through activity photos, field notes, and library books. Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research because the primary purpose is to get data. Researchers' data collection techniques are through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review to obtain data relevant and following the problems in this study. Researchers collected the data by collecting primary data with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation, and stakeholders' interviews. Secondary data were obtained. Researchers collected the data under study. To assist during the data collection process, the researcher used an in-depth interview guide that contained a list of questions related to the topic to be studied.

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To not miss any information, during the interview, it was recorded using a tape recorder. Sampling Technique This research uses the purposive sampling technique, which is considered to know what is being researched. This research is a qualitative study to identify the perceptions/understanding of parent-specific parenting. This study's informants were identified using a purposive method, namely conducting in-depth interviews with toddlers' fathers/mothers. Informants were taken purposively. In efforts to maintain the validity used in the study, researchers used source triangulation and method triangulation. The informants' criteria are as follows: a) father/mother of a toddler; b) communicative; c) willing to be interviewed by signing informed cons.

### 3. Result And Discussion

Perceptions of the Asmat Tribe about the Role of Children in the Family. From the results found regarding the perceptions of the Asmat people (mother) about the role of children in the family, we can conclude that there are still some perceptions of the Asmat people about the role of children in the family, which is still not quite right. The findings in the field state that the Asmat people generally, children are a gift from God. The emergence of this perception is based on the beliefs held by the Asmat Tribe. Most of which are obtained from the Pastor's teaching, which teaches that God is foremost and supreme so that children are gifts which is very valuable. However, there are several facts found from the results of interviews that contradict the beliefs held, including a) Asmat people expect their children to help their parents to look after their younger siblings. This perception arises because of necessity, where parents have to work to find food in the middle of the forest and leave the child at home/village. In this case, the oldest child is entrusted with the care of his younger sibling, as it is known that several families are generally occupied in one house so that parents do not feel reluctant to leave their children; b) There is a perception that children are born to increase the population. This perception arises in general because people still think there is still potential for land grabs between villages. So that to defend their respective territories, it is assumed that a large population is a determining factor for success, especially the male population; and c) Basically, the parent's perception of the role of the child in the family is a picture of the parents' efforts to attend to the child's presence in the family. Although most parents of the Asmat tribe have low education and health, they generally understand very well that the role of children in the family is essential. One of the informants' statement was revealed, namely Fransiskus, a family head who is 34 years old and has six children and the youngest is one-year-old that he only had an elementary education and his wife Norberta Ayury, who is 31 years old, also educated only up to elementary school. His job is as a farmer, usually working to collect fish and sago and believe that children are a gift from God and hope to help parents take sago in large quantities when they are older.

As stated by Nurbaiti, her son Marna dropped out of school only until junior high school in grade 2 and is now working on getting sago from many. Likewise, the opinion expressed by Mr Nurbertus from Damen village. He argued that children, apart from being given by God, can also entertain in the family. If we are lonely, their silence comes to comfort us. Children are precious, but sons are more valuable than girls. Because when a girl gets married leaves her parents. Several other informants made a similar statement that having children have children, and it is useless to live in this world if you do not have children. Most of the informants said they wanted 3-6 children.

In general, marriages yearn for the presence of children in the family. Children's presence will be valuable assets that make a complete family, and parents will do their best so that their children become successful [14; 15]. In general, the presence of children in the family can be seen from the factors that benefit parents from a psychological, economic and social perspective: a) The child is the binder of marriage. The presence of children encourages communication between husband and wife. They experience experiences with their children; b) Parents feel younger by imagining their youth through their child's activities; c) The child is a symbol that connects the past and the future; d) There is a purpose in life that parents want to have with children; e) Children as a source of love and attention; f) Children can increase one's status. In certain societies, individuals only have voting rights after they have children; g) Children as descendants, especially those who adhere to the patrilineal system [16]. Those sons are the descendants' successors. Otherwise, the family is considered to be extinct; h) Children as pears inheritance. For people who adhere to the matrilineal system, girls are the successor and custodian of their inheritance. On the other hand, for those who adhere to the patrilineal system, i) Children have a substantial economic value.

Thus, the Asmat tribe still needs to be educated about the role of children in the family. It can be done by strengthening the role of the family in terms of child ownership which can be achieved through the following methods:

#### **a. Give Children Chores and Obligations at Home**

Our children know we love them, but if we want them to be active and positive family members, we must make them feel that their contribution is essential to the family. Sometimes children feel that they are

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"occupants" of the house in their own house, not "owners". The more they feel that they are essential to life in the family, the stronger the team will be formed in our family. Older children can help cook, set the table, fold clothes, take out the trash, sweep, mop. Meanwhile, young children can help remove groceries from grocery bags, tidying up toys themselves, and cleaning food items. When children start school, they will enjoy doing many of the things we do at home. It remains only for us to see it from the child's perspective, measure the advantages and disadvantages that will arise, and adjust it to their abilities [17].

We may wonder why a child should know the duties of children at home and their responsibilities. After all, families will not suffer if children do not wash dishes or make up their beds. Then what is the motivation underlying their desire to do homework? Of course, our children want to be like us, and they want the rewards of helping us at home. We can give them whatever they want, but please know that that is not how to pamper children properly. Give them an immaterial gift like your time, for example. Explain to the children that if they help you, you will spend time with them walking in the park, watching movies, or other things they want to do. It will teach them at the same time how to be confident that they are suitable for their family.

### **b. Giving Time for Children**

This method is related to the previous method. It is a fact that we spend time in our life with people who are important and meaningful to us. Rewarding the child of your precious time during the first five or six years of their life will be a long-term investment. It is important here to identify and study the characteristics of early childhood to know what is good for them, what their potential is, and what they need. You also have to know how to educate two-year-olds to be wise, which is effective in this period. As time goes on, your child will need you less and less. They will look for friends who can accompany them. Morals, values, attitudes, and perceptions of life in the essential years you can pass on to the children and become seeds in your children [18].

Furthermore, if they start to get bigger and have enough understanding, you can spend time talking to them, exchanging views and thoughts, talking about what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong in the broader life. Give understanding to them how to choose healthy associations. They will know how to avoid adultery like teenagers and young people and learn their role in the broader life.

Most researchers on family decision making equate family decision making with conjugal decision making. The researchers also concluded that parents tend to ignore and exclude the role of children in it. An exploratory study by the University of Tennessee was conducted with focus-group interviews with parents and with data collected from a group of husbands and wives. This study focuses on: a) The role of children in making family decisions in decisions about home furnishings, vehicles, groceries, life insurance, savings, general family decisions, and decisions when on vacation; and b) The relationship between the pattern of children's influence with various demographic conditions, socioeconomic conditions, personality, and attitudes and behavior [19].

Through this research, it was found that it is true that decision making in the family is considered the same as husband-wife decision making in which children are excluded and not included in the process. The influence of children in family decision making has been greatly neglected in family life. It does not matter how old they are, whether they understand what decisions are being discussed, or if they are old enough to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each decision, as someone who knows how to be a good parent, it is a good idea to invite your children to take part in small discussions. You can ask their opinion and consider their point of view and their opinion on this matter. You indirectly practice how to maintain a good household by balancing the role of children in the family. Children can know how to deal with family problems that are still within their range of thinking. More than that, including children in making family decisions can be said to be one of the good ways to educate children. They will learn how to make their parents happy and at least understand a happy family's concept and how to build it from a simple perspective.

### **c. Give Children Obligations and Responsibilities to Others**

Knowing what each family member's roles are and whether everyone is satisfied with that role will be very useful for the happiness of a family. Your child relates not only to you as a parent but also to siblings and neighbours like family relatives, especially if the child has siblings. They need to learn that there are relationships with other family members they need to care for and strengthen. It can be done in the following ways: a) For example, with the eldest child, give him the understanding that his job is to play the role of the second parent after father and mother for younger siblings or siblings. Teach them the obligation to love and nurture their younger siblings while teaching young children the obligation to respect and follow their elders' guidance; b) Negotiate the role of the child as brothers to siblings. Know what they like and do not like about the role. Parents also need to understand the relationship between one child and another if they do not get along with each other and communicate how they should relate. Also, consider their perspective and how their alternative roles are as brothers; c) This method is also one of the right ways to educate children. Besides, by

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playing this role in the family, children will learn to understand that they do not only live as children of their father and mother but also as brothers to their younger siblings, as younger siblings to siblings, as protectors to one another [20; 21]. There is a sense of responsibility, leadership and loyalty inherent in these duties and obligations.

Perceptions of the Asmat Tribe about Child Ownership - From the results found regarding the perceptions of the Asmat tribe about child ownership, we can conclude that there are still some perceptions of the Asmat tribe that are still inaccurate. A small proportion of the ownership of children in the Asmat tribe has legal legality as evidenced by a birth certificate, but practical proof of ownership of children through daily activities still does not interpret the true sense of ownership of the parents.

The analysis of the perceptions of the Asmat tribe people regarding child ownership is as follows: a) The ease of giving child custody to siblings shows that the sense of parental ownership of children is low - This is based on several factors, among others: the economic condition of the family it does not support the fulfilment of daily needs, so there is an assumption that by giving the child to a sibling who is more economically capable, the child's life can be more secure, although some children are increasingly neglected. Apart from economic factors, a parent's consideration in giving up a child to a sibling is that the sibling has no offspring; b) Parents who are fully responsible for their lives (in raising, providing love, security, affection and education). The warmth of parental affection, in various studies, can positively affect the growth and development of children. Children who are given warmth and sincere love will improve the health status and intelligence of the child. Flood the children with fun sentences, touches of affection, hugs, kisses, smiles, laps, caresses, and so on. Children who feel that their environment (especially parents) gives sincere love and in sufficient quantities [22; 23]. As a result, we can be sure that the child will behave and behave positively.

Conversely, the child feels that he is not getting his parents' attention and affection as expected. So the child is at risk of developing into a problem child; and c) Children are too freed in various ways (choose not to go to school or leave school, play without supervision in risky environmental conditions). It is based on the understanding that children who can survive through natural selection are the ones who become their property (usually at the age of the child over eight years). The neglect of children who do not go to school is caused by several factors, including the child receives harsh treatment from the teacher at school so that it traumatizes the child to school, the child does not have school equipment, so the child feels ashamed of his friends [24]. In some families, children are taken to the forest to look for sago, so they do not have the opportunity to go to school.

Education is primarily and mainly exists in the family environment so that children are too liberated in various ways. It means that children do not get good guidance and direction from parents, it can trigger unwanted things, so that the role of parents in awakening and providing understanding is essential mainly because the child has a strong relationship over a long period and is in a solid emotional connection with his parents. Parents have an influence of 70% on their children's growth and development, and the remaining 30% is influenced by the environment, namely school and society. It is because children spend more time with their families (especially with their parents). In fact, in general, parents are the most sincere in serving their biological children [25].

For this reason, parents who want their children's future to be successful, beneficial to others, have noble character and be happy need to learn how to get along and serve their children properly [26]. Unfortunately, many parents do things that should not be done to their children, which is detrimental to their development. On the other hand, they do not do what children need to grow and develop optimally. As a result, the growth and development of children are not optimal. In some cases, they even develop into problem children who can harm their future, besides also harming other parties (the community and family) by their habit of creating problems. It occurs due to the lack of understanding of parents about early childhood education. Several institutions have organized courses for future brides. The course aims to provide provisions for prospective parents [27]. It illustrates that building a household needs the best possible preparation, including the activities of educating children.

There is a partial perception of the Asmat tribe that the husband should not carry the baby immediately before the umbilical cord disappears (one month, two months) - It is based on the belief that if a man (father) touches a newborn child so that it is exposed to blood that can make the father weak or sick. At the same time, there is a perception that a father must remain in good health to maintain village security from enemy attacks.

Newborn children need the touch and affection of a father, so the fear of a father who becomes weak or sick after touching a newborn child is not appropriate. The mother and father also play an essential role in the growth and development of the baby [28; 29]. Fathers can be more closely involved with newborns early on. It is essential not only for the first child but the second child, and so on, you can imagine how the baby will get touch (stimulation/stimuli) not only from the mother but also from the father, the interaction not only from the mother

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but also from the father, as well as the affection from both parents. His social, emotional, intelligence and development relationships will be better than if he only gets them from the mother. The father can start this closer relationship, both physically and mentally (bonding) from an early age. Since the baby is born into the world, he does not have to wait for the baby to grow bigger. The father's role from an early age is suitable for the development of the baby and helps mothers have more time to rest and do other work. The thing to remember, babies need their mothers as much as they need their fathers. The special relationship between mother and baby has been established since the baby was still in the womb. Now is the time for Dad to take a more prominent role.

### 4. Conclusion

The conclusions that can be drawn from all the descriptions above are as follows: a) The perception of the Asmat people about the role of children is not quite right, so that it is necessary to strengthen the role of the family through education; b) The perception of the Asmat people about child ownership is low where parents are too freeing children in various ways so that the church is advised to be proactive in awakening and providing understanding to the family.

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