



The Value of Children in Generation Z

Yuliana Ristantya Ningsih^(✉)

Department of Demography and Civil Registration, College of Vocational Studies, Universitas
Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
yuliana.ristantya@staff.uns.ac.id

Abstract. This study aims to determine the perception of Generation Z about the direct costs and opportunity costs of having children, gender relations in decision-making on the number of children, and the dimensions of the value of children. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with research subjects are Generation Z who were born during 1996–2015. The results show that (1) 83.8% of Gen-Z agree with the direct cost of having children, but 45.5% of Gen-Z does not agree that the presence of children will cause opportunity costs, especially for mothers; (2) The relation of gender equality is shown from 99% of Gen-Z who considers the decision on the number of children in the family is a form of mutual agreement; (3) 42.4% Gen-Z has a perception of the dimension of the emotional value of children and 39.4% has a perception of the dimension of guarantee of old age.

Keywords: Child values · Generation Z · direct costs · opportunity costs · gender relations

1 Introduction

Aggregate fertility rate in society is influenced by social, economic, and cultural conditions of the community. According to Davis and Blake (1956) and Freedman (1972) in Nauck (2007) these three variables affect fertility through intermediate variables. One of the intermediate variables that affect fertility decisions at the individual and family level is the output of behavioral results which are heavily influenced by psychological conditions.

1.1 Child Value Theory

Family psychological factors that influence behavior and fertility rates are child values. According to Robinson and Harbison (1983) the value of children is a perception that leads to the expectations of parents for the presence of children for the family. The theory of child values is considered to be able to explain fertility behavior that can differ from one family to another, as well as the pattern and level of fertility in an area.

According to Friedman et al. (1994) the decline in fertility rates in developed countries is caused by 4 factors, namely the biological condition of the partner, the availability

of contraceptives, opportunities, and the desire of parents to have children. Developed countries experience a decline in fertility due to shifts in values, norms, and preferences for the number of children they want.

The theory of child value is also closely related to the economic theory of fertility. According to the economic theory of fertility, the presence of children in a family is the result of a couple's logical decision in terms of cost and advantage. If the child is considered to bring more benefits than the costs that must be incurred by the parents, then the parents will want the presence of the child. According to Caldwell (1982) in Mayer et al. (2005) if parents tend to assess the presence of children can bring benefits both in terms of emotional, social, and economic, it will affect the high level of fertility in an area.

The existence of children in a family according to the value of children theory according to Robinson (1983) in Hatta (2012) consists of 3 dimensions, namely: (1) consumer goods in terms of entertainment or parental happiness, (2) production facilities where children at a certain time can become workers who can increase family income, (3) a source of peace in a family, including being the one who takes care of parents when they are old.

1.2 Development of Children's Values in Indonesia

Indonesia as a developing country (NSB) has also experienced a shift in norms regarding the number of children in a family. According to Mulder (2000) in Albert (2005) the family has a central role in Indonesian society and is the center of identity for the community, as well as marriage ties and the existence of children which are still important.

1.2.1 The Value of Children in Indonesia in the Old Order – New Order Era

Indonesian society during the New Order era still had a pattern of life with economic sources from the agrarian sector. At that time, the norm of the extended family was still desired by many Indonesians. According to White (1975) in Singarimbun (1977) children in agricultural families in Java have a strong dimension of economic value. Children from the age of 10 have been able to enter into agricultural activities and become active workers who can help the family farming business. The more children, the family can have more labor and sources of income.

Children also have an important role in the parents' pension system (Singarimbun, 1977). Parents with non-formal jobs in Indonesia tend not to have an adequate old-age savings/security system. Children are the only guarantee for old age for these parents.

Koentjaraningrat (1957) also explained that Javanese people with higher socio-economic status do not need help or support from children, but they still want more children, especially boys. This is related to the value of children in terms of social dimensions. Having children in large numbers is considered to be a determinant of social status and pride in society.

1.2.2 The Value of Children in Indonesia in the Revolutionary Era

Indonesia experienced political and economic turmoil during the Revolutionary Period. In addition, the flow of globalization is also getting faster with advances in the field of

information and telecommunications. This certainly has an effect on changes in values and norms in a family, including norms regarding child values and fertility.

The presence of children in a family is still the output of a logical choice between the benefits and the costs. The number of children in the family continues to decline with Indonesia's TFR reaching 2.29 in 2019 (World Bank, 2020).

According to Albert (2005) the value of children in Indonesian society has changed. While during the Old Order – New Order, children's values tended to lead to an economic dimension and old age insurance, but after the Revolutionary Period, children's values tended to a socio-normative dimension. Generational differences also affect the value of children at that time.

Albert (2005) explains that the value of children in the boomers generation tends to lead to the economic dimension and guarantees for old age. Millennials tend to have normative emotional and social dimensions.

2 Research Goal

This study aims to determine: (1) generation Z's perception of the costs (direct costs and opportunity costs) that must be borne when having children, (2) fertility behavior of Generation Z as indicated by the relationship that determines the number of children in the family, (3) dimensions of children's values owned by Generation Z (1996–2015).

3 Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative descriptive method. The research subjects are Generation Z who were born between 1996–2015. The object of this research is the value of children which will then be described in 3 variables.

The variables of this research are (1) the perception of child costs, (2) gender relations as a decision maker on the number of children, and (3) the dimensions of the value of children. The three variables were analyzed by descriptive statistical methods.

The population in this study were students of the D-IV Demographics and Civil Registration Study Program, UNS Vocational School, totalling 358 people. The process of taking research samples using the Simple Random Sampling method and obtained a total of 99 research respondents.

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Generation Z's Perception of Child Costs

The measurement of Generation Z's perception of the direct cost dimension when having children is seen from the indicators of the costs that must be incurred to raise children (care) and the sacrifices of parents in terms of opportunity costs.

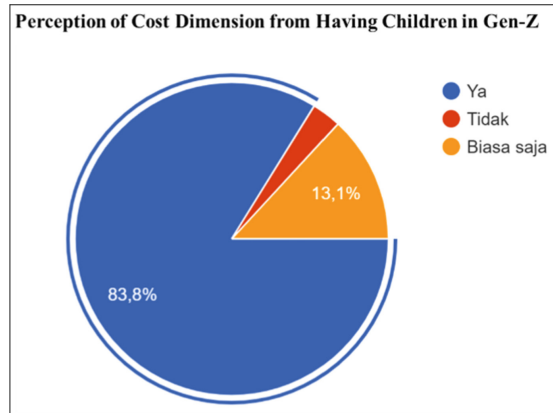


Fig. 1. Generation Z's perception of the direct costs of having children.

4.1.1 Child Care Cost (Direct Cost)

The presence of children in a family certainly has consequences in terms of costs. Children from the time they are in the womb to adulthood need a variety of costs for basic, secondary, health and education needs. Parents have to spend more and more if they want to have children who are of good quality physically and psychologically.

Based on the results of the study, the majority of Generation Z think about the consequences of direct costs when they later have children. As many as 83.8% of Generation Z think about the direct cost factor for raising children, even from the time they are in the womb. The percentage of Generation Z who don't think about direct costs is only 3.1%. Differences in perceptions of the emergence of direct costs when having children in Generation Z can be seen in Fig. 1.

The high percentage of Generation Z who have a perception of agreeing with the existence of direct costs shows that the norm of the more children the more sustenance is no longer relevant. Generation Z has started to think about the quality of children compared to the quantity of children. Generation Z tends to think that the quality of children in a family must be guaranteed.

This is of course related to the direct costs that they have to pay. Fertility economic theory also applies here. The more children born, the greater the direct costs will be. So if the presence of a child is also seen in terms of direct costs, then a family will limit births.

A large direct cost is also related to the quality of the child. Parents who want children with a good quality of life, of course, have to pay more direct costs. Generation Z is starting to think that children will be a little more profitable because the direct costs they have to spend can be more controlled.

4.1.2 Generation Z's Perception of Children's Opportunity Costs

In addition to direct costs, the presence of children also brings opportunity costs for their parents. One of the most prominent examples is the reduced opportunity to pursue a career or work for a mother who already has children. Mothers have a crucial role because they

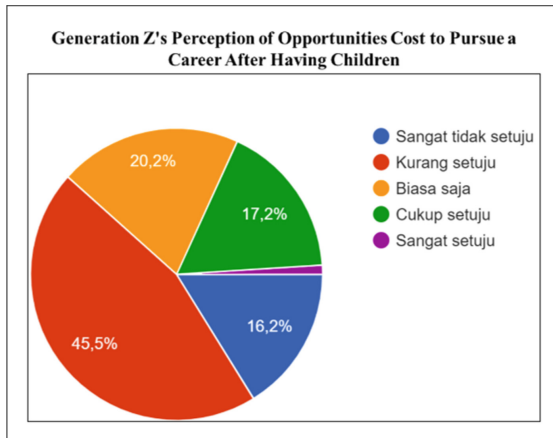


Fig. 2. Generation Z's perception of the emergence of indirect costs (opportunity costs) for children.

have to breastfeed their children. In a society that still adheres to a patriarchal culture, the role of child care is also still borne by a mother.

The results showed that the majority of Generation Z did not agree that the presence of children was associated with reduced career opportunities, especially for women. 20.2% of Generation Z is also neutral towards the emergence of this opportunity cost. Generation Z who strongly agree with the reduced career opportunities after having children only reached 0.9%. Generation Z's perception of the emergence of indirect costs from the presence of children is presented in Fig. 2.

This is related to gender equality which has begun to increase and has become the focus of attention in the global development paradigm (Sustainable Development Goals). This focus on gender equality is also included in the values adopted by Generation Z. One form of this is the expansion of opportunities to continue working for women even though they are already mothers.

4.2 Gender Relations in Determining the Number of Children

The number of children in a family is determined by many social, economic and cultural factors. One of the cultural factors is gender power relations in the family. For families that still have patriarchal norms, the husband as the head of the household makes the decision on the number of children.

Generation Z's perception of the role of decision makers on the number of children in a family turns out to be the majority according to mutual agreement. Even the percentage reaches 99%. As much as 1% of Generation Z stated that the party who has the right to make the decision on the number of children is the wife. Details of the perception of decision makers on the number of children in the family can be seen in Fig. 3.

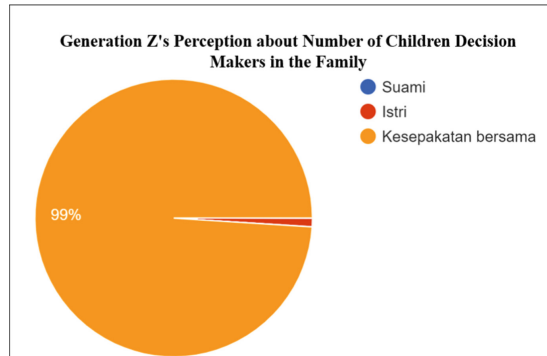


Fig. 3. Generation Z's perception of the emergence of indirect costs (opportunity costs) for children.

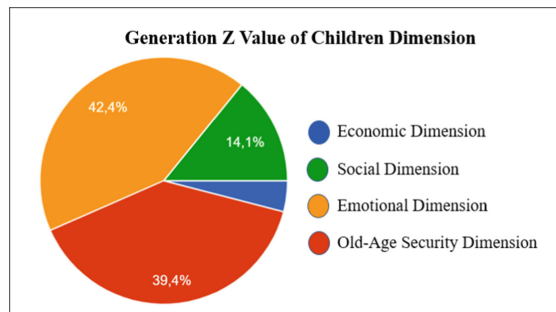


Fig. 4. Dimensions of child values adopted by Generation Z.

4.3 Children's Values in Generation Z

The dimensions of children's values used in this study are divided into 4, namely: (1) economic, (2) social, (3) emotional, and (4) old age insurance. The results showed that the majority of Generation Z had children's values from the emotional dimension. The percentage even reached 42.4%. This is in accordance with the results of research from Albert et al. (2005) which concludes that the adolescent generation in Indonesia also shows a preference for the emotional dimension of the presence of children. Details of the percentage of the dimensions of the child's value in Generation Z can be seen in Fig. 4.

If the majority value adopted by Generation Z is emotional value, then the large number of children no longer affects a family. The emotional needs of the presence of children can be met, even though the number of children owned by a family is small. This could have an impact on the decline in fertility rates in Indonesia.

Although the majority of Generation Z has shown a tendency to embrace the emotional value dimension of children, there are other dimensions that are no less significant. 39.4% of Generation Z still adheres to the perception of the dimensions of children's

values as guarantees for old age. This is related to the values and cultural norms in Indonesia where children still play an important role in the old age of their parents.

Although it is not expected to support the parents' economy when they enter retirement age, children are still the first priority to take care of their parents. Generation Z also still has the same mindset as the previous generation in Indonesia according to the results of research from Albert et al. (2005).

In contrast to the results of research on the value of children during the New Order era, Generation Z has a perception of the economic value of children which is relatively small. This is indicated by the percentage of children's economic value dimensions which only reached 4.1%. The percentage of the dimensions of the child's value which is quite minimal shows that there has been a shift in norms and values in Indonesian society.

Generation Z is no longer completely dependent on the economy for the presence of children. Families no longer rely on children who have entered working age to meet their needs. This is also related to the productivity of Generation Z which is expected to be maximized with the wider opportunity for them to work in the formal sector or create their own business fields.

References

- Nauck, Bernhard. 2007. Value of Children and the Framing of Fertility: Result from A Cross-Cultural Comparative Survey in 10 Societies. *European Sociological Review*. 23 (5), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462125>
- Robinson, Warren C., Sarah F. Harbison, 1983, Menuju Teori Fertilitas Terpadu, Yogyakarta: PPSK UGM.
- Friedman, Debra, Michael Hechter, dan Satoshi Kanazawa, 1994, A Theory of the Value of Children, *Demography* (internet), Agustus, 31(3), <http://www.jstor.org>
- Hatta, M. 2012. *Persepsi Keluarga terhadap Nilai Anak*. <http://kaltim.bkkbn.go.id/ViewArtikel.aspx?ArtikelID=260>
- Mayer, Boris, Isabelle Albert, Gisela Trommsdorff, Beate Schwarz, 2005, Value of Children in Germany: Dimensions, Comparison og Generations, and Relevance for Parenting, *Applied Psychology* (Internet), Juli, 54 (3). <http://www.journal.sagepub.com>
- Singarimbun, Masri. 1977. Value of Children: A Study in Java. Yogyakarta: Population Institute Gadjah Mada University.
- Koentjaraningrat. 1957. *A Preliminary Description of the Javanese Kinship System. Southeast Asian Studies, Cultural Report Series*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University.
- Albert, Isabelle, Gisela Trommsdorff, Boris Mayer, dan Beate Schwartz, 2005, Value of Children in Urban and Rural Indonesia: Socio Demographic Indicators, Cultural Aspects, and Empirical Findings, *Applied Psychology* (Internet), Juli, 54 (3). <http://www.journal.sagepub.com>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

