

FATHERING PATTERNS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEMATIC TAFSIR: RECONSTRUCTING THE FATHER'S ROLE IN FEMALE MIGRANT WORKER FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

The international labor migration of Indonesian women has reshaped household caregiving structures, positioning fathers as primary caregivers despite the absence of social scripts preparing them for this role. This study aims to analyze fathering patterns exemplified in Qur'anic narratives and their relevance to the parenting of children of female migrant workers (FMW) in Indonesia. This qualitative library research employs a thematic (maudhu'i) tafsir approach combined with a sociological-gender perspective. Primary data consist of Qur'anic verses on parenting (QS. Luqman 13–14; QS. Hud 42–43; QS. As-Saffat 100–102), analyzed following al-Farmawi's thematic exegesis method across both riwayat-based (bi al-ma'tsur) and reason-based (bi al-ra'yi) schools of tafsir, and comparatively interpreted alongside contemporary empirical typologies of migrant fathers and official data from Indonesia's Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI). The findings show that the examples of Luqman, Prophet Nuh, and Prophet Ibrahim embody three caregiving dimensions—sustained moral guidance, unconditional patience, and dialogical engagement—which correspond conceptually to the “intimate” and “democratic” father types identified in contemporary typologies, in contrast to the “indifferent” and “authoritarian” types associated with poorer psychosocial outcomes among left-behind children. The study recommends strengthening pre-departure parenting preparation for prospective fathers of FMW families and sustained psychosocial support for left-behind children.

Keywords: *father involvement; thematic tafsir; female migrant workers*

INTRODUCTION

The migration of Indonesian women workers abroad cannot be separated from the pressure of structural poverty that continues to shadow households across many regions, particularly in the main migrant-sending pockets such as East Java, West Java, and Central Java. Data from the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI) show that throughout 2025 a total of 296,948 Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) were recorded, with 187,468 of them—or roughly 63 percent—being women¹, a figure that is relatively stable compared with 2024, which recorded 297,434 placements dominated by the informal sector, a share that rose by 9.17 percent from the previous year². Furthermore, official

¹ Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia [Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency], “Data Penempatan dan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia Periode Tahun 2025” [Data on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers for the Year 2025], accessed August 6, 2026, <https://bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/data-penempatan-dan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-periode-tahun-2025>.

² Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia [Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency], “Data Penempatan dan Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia Periode Tahun 2024” [Data on the Placement and

estimates from the Ministry of Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection indicate that some 4.3 million migrant workers are not officially registered, which means that the actual population of children left behind by migrant mothers is likely far larger than the recorded figures suggest.

Women who decide to migrate abroad experience a rupture in direct caregiving contact with their children, a condition that many studies associate with a decline in children's social and psychological well-being. Recent qualitative research in Eastern Indonesia found that children left behind by parental migration experience disrupted emotional bonds, heightened anxiety, sadness, and in a number of cases self-isolation, brought on by severed communication and abrupt changes in everyday caregiving patterns.

In the conventional family structure, childrearing has long been construed as though it were the mother's sole responsibility, while the father is positioned as the head of the household responsible for the economic dimension. When the mother migrates, this construction is forced to change: the father, who was previously prepared neither socially nor psychologically for the caregiving role, becomes the most dominant figure and is directly responsible for the child's growth and development. This shift in roles is consistent with the finding that perceptions of the left-behind father in Southeast Asia have changed significantly—from an initial portrayal casting them as figures who avoid the nurturing role, toward a recognition that substitute fathers can prove competent and effective as primary caregivers³.

The fundamental problem is that few studies have explicitly connected the normative example of fathering in the Qur'an with the social-empirical reality of contemporary female migrant worker (FMW) families in Indonesia. Earlier studies by Santoso (2020) on the fulfillment of child custody rights in FMW families from the perspective of *maqashid sharia*, by Syarif (2018) on caregiving patterns and the fulfillment of FMW children's basic rights, as well as a study on the socio-economic and educational conditions of children in women migrant worker households (2022), have offered important insights into the legal and sociological dimensions of this issue. None of the three, however, has specifically constructed an analytical framework bringing the exemplary prophetic narratives of the Qur'an together with the typology of substitute father roles identified in recent empirical research. Unlike those studies, this research offers a thematic (*maudhu'i*) tafsir approach that connects the exemplary fathering found in Qur'anic narratives—Luqman, Prophet Nuh, and Prophet Ibrahim—with the typology of fathers caring for FMW children identified in contemporary sociological research, thereby providing both a normative-theological foundation and practical applicability for the problem

Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers for the Year 2024], accessed August 6, 2026, <https://bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/data-penempatan-dan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-periode-tahun-2024>

³ Theodora Lam and Brenda S. A. Yeoh, "Migrant Mothers, Left-Behind Fathers: The Negotiation of Gender Subjectivities in Indonesia and the Philippines," *Gender, Place & Culture*, published online October 27, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2016.1249349>.

of caring for FMW children in Indonesia. On the basis of this account, the research is formulated into three questions: first, how is the father's parenting pattern portrayed in Qur'anic narratives according to the interpretations of scholars? Second, what are the psychosocial conditions of FMW children and the typology of substitute father roles emerging in contemporary empirical reality in Indonesia? Third, what is the relevance and what are the implications of the Qur'anic example of fathering for the care of FMW children in Indonesia? This study aims to answer these three questions while offering practical recommendations for families and policymakers.

METHOD

Research Type and Approach

This study is qualitative library research, that is, research whose data and objects of study are drawn from written materials in the form of Qur'anic verses, tafsir works, and scholarly literature, rather than from direct field observation or interviews. The study brings two approaches together in an integrative manner: a thematic (maudhu'i) tafsir approach to trace and analyze verses on fathering patterns, and a sociological-gender approach to read the social conditions of FMW families in Indonesia along with the typology of substitute father roles identified in previous research.

Data Sources

The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses relating to fathering patterns, comprising QS. Luqman: 13–14, QS. Hud: 42–43, QS. As-Saffat: 100–102, QS. At-Tahrim: 6, QS. Al-Isra: 31, and QS. Al-Baqarah: 233, together with the tafsir works consulted, namely Tafsir Jalalain⁴ and Tuhfat al-Mawdud bi Ahkam al-Mawdud by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah⁵. The secondary data consist of official BP2MI/KP2MI data for the 2024–2025 period⁶ and scholarly literature on father involvement as well as on the condition of children left behind by parental migration (left-behind children) published within the last five years.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data were collected through documentation techniques in three stages: identifying search keywords, selecting sources on the basis of relevance and currency, and compiling the data into a thematic framework. Data analysis employed content analysis combined with al-Farmawi's steps of maudhu'i tafsir⁷, comprising: establishing the theme of study, gathering the related verses, arranging

⁴Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Jalalain*, trans. Bahrūn Abu Bakar (Bandung: Sinar Baru Algensindo), 752.

⁵Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah, *Tuhfat al-Mawdūd bi Ahkām al-Mawlūd* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah), 179.

⁷Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawī, *al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawdū'ī: Dirāsah Manhajīyyah Mawdū'īyyah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ḥadārah al-'Arabiyyah, 1977).

them according to the flow of the narrative, grasping the correlation (munasabah) between verses, complementing the discussion with relevant hadiths as clarification (bayan)⁸, and analyzing the verses comprehensively. The next stage was a comparative-interpretive analysis bringing the Qur'anic example of fathering together with the typology of FMW fathers derived from empirical research⁹, presented in the form of an analytical matrix (Table 1).

The validity of the data was maintained through source triangulation, namely comparing the consistency of findings between BP2MI data and scholarly journal publications, as well as rechecking the numbering of surahs and verses in all Qur'anic citations. This study carries the limitation of having no primary field data (direct interviews with FMW fathers and children), so that the comparative analysis is conceptual in nature and rests on already published literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of the Father's Role in Childrearing

The father's contribution to childrearing is an important factor in a child's development. Contemporary literature defines father involvement as a multidimensional concept encompassing direct interaction with the child, the management of child-related responsibilities, and the monitoring of the child's activities and social interactions¹⁰, an understanding that updates Lamb's classic model through Pleck's reformulation into three dimensions: engagement (direct involvement), accessibility (availability), and responsibility (responsibility for planning)¹¹. The significance of father involvement is supported by a recent meta-analysis of 65 studies which found that almost every dimension of father involvement correlates significantly with children's social-emotional competence, with paternal warmth and responsiveness showing the strongest correlation¹².

The important place of the father in the family is captured in the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "A father is the middle part of the gate of paradise. So keep to that gate, or let it go" (narrated by Tirmidhi). This hadith affirms that the father is a key figure in guiding

⁸Muhammad Nu'man ibn 'Abd al-Salam al-Ansari, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah. Hadith citations in this article follow the standard convention of Islamic scholarship (naming the mukharrij/transmitter, e.g., "narrated by Tirmidhi"), as is customary in the classical works of fiqh and tafsir that serve as primary sources; specific hadith numbers follow the editions used by the authors.

⁹Slamet Mulyana, Kismiyati El Karimah, and Meria Octavianti, "Parenting for Left-Behind Children in Migrant Worker Families: A Study in West Java," *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 4, no. 15 (2019).

¹⁰Ema Diniz et al., "Father Involvement during Early Childhood: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 13, no. 1 (2021): 77–99.

¹¹Joseph H. Pleck, "Paternal Involvement: Revised Conceptualization and Theoretical Linkages with Child Outcomes," in *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 5th ed., ed. Michael E. Lamb (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 58–93.

¹²Que Zheng et al., "Father's Involvement Is Critical in Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood: A Meta-Analysis," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 74 (2025).

and educating children, a position that grows all the more relevant when the mother cannot be physically present because of labor migration.

This urgency becomes even clearer when set against the fatherless phenomenon—the absence of the father’s role physically, emotionally, or functionally—which a number of studies describe as fairly widespread in Indonesian Muslim society and as shaped by divorce, economic pressure, patriarchal culture, and the low level of parenting literacy among fathers.¹³ Interestingly, the Qur’an in fact offers a normative corrective to this phenomenon through the narratives of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Jacob, and Prophet Nuh, which portray the father’s role in its fullness as spiritual leader, educator in faith, moral guide, emotional protector, and at the same time a dialogical communicator full of affection.¹⁵ The father–child dialogue in these Qur’anic narratives, when read through a maqashidi tafsir approach, shows that the active presence of the father is not merely a complement to the mother’s role but a protective function in its own right, one that cannot be fully replaced by any other figure in the family.¹⁴

This protective function is important to grasp in full, since contemporary research shows that the absence of the father’s role correlates with fairly serious psychological consequences for the child, including low self-confidence, disrupted emotional attachment, and vulnerability to identity crisis during the transition into adulthood.¹⁵ Within an Islamic framework, the active involvement of the father figure therefore serves a dual function: as a spiritual-moral protector who instills the foundations of faith from an early age, and at the same time as a psychological counterweight that mitigates the negative risks of the fatherless condition for the child’s emotional and social development.¹⁶ For female migrant worker families, in which the father is often the only parental figure physically present, it is precisely this understanding of the dual function that makes the Qur’anic example of fathering not merely a normative reference but a pressing practical need.

The significance of the father’s role ultimately rests on a more fundamental foundation in Islam, namely the standing of the child as a trust (amanah) whose rights both parents are obliged to safeguard

¹³ Dian Wahyu Puspita Astuti and Bashori Bashori, "Fenomena *Fatherless* dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Kajian tentang Relasi Ayah dan Anak dalam Kisah Al-Qur'an)" [The Fatherless Phenomenon in Qur'anic Perspective: A Study of Father–Child Relations in the Narratives of the Qur'an], *Fathir: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 70–81, <https://doi.org/10.71153/fathir.v2i1.180>.

¹⁴ Zahrotun and M. K. Anwar, "Dialog Ayah dan Anak dalam Al-Qur'an: Analisis Tafsir Maqashidi terhadap Fenomena *Fatherless*" [Father–Child Dialogue in the Qur'an: A Maqashidi Tafsir Analysis of the Fatherless Phenomenon], *Al-Qudwah: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 1, no. 2 (2023): 213, <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/alqudwah.v1i2.27593>.

¹⁵ A. Rahmadhani et al., "*Fatherless* Generation: Mengungkap Dampak Kehilangan Peran Ayah terhadap Psikologis Anak dalam Kaca Mata Islam" [Fatherless Generation: Uncovering the Impact of the Loss of the Father’s Role on Children’s Psychology from an Islamic Viewpoint], *Darajat: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 2 (2025): 128–146, <https://doi.org/10.58518/darajat.v7i2.3017>.

¹⁶ M. T. Al-Jundi and M. Aufa, "Pola Asuh Qurani dalam Mencegah Fenomena *Fatherless*: Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Kisah Nabi Ibrahim dalam Al-Qur'an" [Qur'anic Parenting in Preventing the Fatherless Phenomenon: An Exegesis of the Verses on the Narrative of Prophet Ibrahim in the Qur'an], *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 10, no. 2 (2021).

and fulfill, as affirmed in QS. At-Tahrim: 6, "Guard yourselves and your families against the fire of hell." Within this framework, the father's involvement is not merely a psychologically advisable choice of the sort indicated by the theory of *father involvement*,⁴ but a normative obligation inherent in his responsibility to fulfill the child's basic rights—from protection and material provision to religious education—as will be set out in greater detail in the following section. The urgency of the father's role in childrearing thus cannot be separated from the framework of children's rights in Islam: when a father is absent or negligent, what occurs is not merely a shortfall of psychological involvement but a potential failure to honor a religious trust itself—a condition that Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab went so far as to call a form of the father's disobedience toward his child, rather than the reverse.

Children's Rights in Islam

The urgency of discussing children's rights in Islam becomes all the plainer when set against the actual condition of Indonesian children today. The Year-End Report of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 2,031 cases of child rights violations throughout 2025, with 2,063 children becoming victims—51.5 percent of them girls—and, most troubling of all, the violations frequently took place within the family environment itself, with biological fathers recorded as perpetrators in 9 percent of cases and biological mothers in 8.2 percent.¹⁷ These data underscore that violations of children's rights occur not only in public spaces but also within the family institution that ought to be the foremost place of protection. In the dimension of civil rights, the fulfillment of basic rights still leaves gaps: Statistics Indonesia recorded that birth certificate ownership among children in early childhood in Indonesia had reached only 86.33 percent in 2023, with sharp disparities between regions—from 97.63 percent in DKI Jakarta down to only 47.96 percent in Papua¹⁸—while national coverage for children aged 0–18 stood at 91.79 percent in the same year, a slight increase from 90.41 percent in 2022.¹⁹ This reality shows that the fulfillment of children's rights, including rights explicitly mandated by the Qur'an such as the registration of birth and protection from parental negligence, remains a shared task—and at the same time justifies the importance of this normative-theological study

¹⁷ Jasra Putra, cited in "KPAI Catat 2.031 Kasus Pelanggaran Hak Anak di 2025, Pelaku Terbanyak Ortu" [KPAI Records 2,031 Cases of Child Rights Violations in 2025, with Parents the Most Frequent Perpetrators], *detikNews*, January 15, 2026, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8309693/kpai-catat-2-031-kasus-pelanggaran-hak-anak-di-2025-pelaku-terbanyak-ortu>.

¹⁸ Badan Pusat Statistik, *Profil Anak Usia Dini 2024* [Early Childhood Profile 2024] (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024).

¹⁹ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Persentase Anak Usia 0–18 Tahun yang Memiliki Akta Kelahiran" [Percentage of Children Aged 0–18 Holding a Birth Certificate], cited in GoodStats Data, "Provinsi dengan Persentase Anak yang Memiliki Akta Kelahiran Tertinggi 2023" [Provinces with the Highest Percentage of Children Holding a Birth Certificate, 2023], accessed August 7, 2026, <https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/provinsi-dengan-persentase-anak-yang-memiliki-akta-kelahiran-tertinggi-2023-y8X0i>.

as a basis for strengthening family awareness, particularly among FMW families vulnerable to caregiving dysfunction owing to the absence of one parent.

Drawing on a review of verses and hadiths, there are five categories of children's rights relevant to the context of caring for FMW children. First, the right to protection, as set down in QS. At-Tahrim: 6, "O you who believe, guard yourselves and your families against the fire of hell." Al-Mahalli in Tafsir Jalalain explains that guarding oneself and one's family is meant to keep them ever obedient to Allah, something realized in practice through good education, as the Prophet said: "There is no gift a parent gives a child better than good education" (narrated by Ahmad).

Second, the right to life and to grow and develop, affirmed in QS. Al-Isra: 31, which sternly forbids the killing of children on grounds of poverty. Third, the right to education, which encompasses religious and moral education through habituation, exemplary conduct, counsel, and dialogue. Fourth, the right to material provision and inheritance, as regulated in QS. Al-Baqarah: 233, which obliges the father to provide sustenance and clothing for the mother who breastfeeds his child. Fifth, the right to equal treatment, as exemplified in the hadith narrated by al-Baihaqi concerning the Prophet's admonition to a father who treated his son and his daughter differently.

In the context of FMW families, the fulfillment of all five of these rights depends entirely on the readiness and capacity of the father as sole caregiver while the mother is abroad, which makes an understanding of the Qur'anic example of fathering a practical necessity rather than merely a normative exercise.

Qur'anic Verses on Fathering Patterns and Their Implementation for the Children of Female Migrant Workers

The Qur'an portrays the father-child caregiving relationship through the narratives of Luqman, Prophet Nuh, and Prophet Ibrahim, each of which carries a different yet mutually complementary dimension of caregiving. To arrive at a comprehensive understanding, the interpretation of these three narratives is traced through two different modes of tafsir: tafsir bi al-ma'tsur, which gives weight to transmitted reports and occasions of revelation, and tafsir bi al-ra'yi/adabi-ijtima'i, which gives weight to social context and contemporary relevance.

1. The Example of Luqman: Counsel and Education in Tawhid

QS. Luqman: 13 portrays Luqman counseling his son not to associate partners with Allah, a grave wrong. Ibn Kathir in his tafsir explains that Luqman gave to his son—the person dearest to him—the most excellent of his knowledge, namely the message of tawhid, evidence that a father's finest counsel is born of sincere affection rather than of formal obligation alone²⁰. M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir

²⁰ Alu Syaikh, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, on the interpretation of QS. Luqman: 13.

al-Mishbah adds an important nuance to the word *ya'izhuhu* (counseling him): this verb form carries the sense of repetition and continuity, indicating that Luqman's counsel was not a single event but a continuous and gentle process of education²¹. Hamka in *Tafsir Al-Azhar* offers a different yet complementary emphasis: he reads the prohibition of shirk as a form of wrong done to oneself, because tawhid is in essence the liberation of the soul from servitude to any other than Allah, so that education in tawhid instilled by the father from an early age works to form the child's psychological freedom rather than mere ritual compliance²². A comparison of these three interpretations shows that a father's counsel in the narrative of Luqman holds three dimensions at once: an affective dimension (born of affection), a methodological dimension (continuous rather than incidental), and a psychological dimension (liberating rather than constraining). In the context of FMW children who receive little spiritual guidance owing to the mother's absence, these three dimensions affirm that a father's religious counsel must be carried out as a loving routine aimed at freeing the child psychologically, not at adding the burden of rigid obedience.

2. The Example of Prophet Nuh: Patience and Unconditional Responsibility

QS. Hud: 42–43 recounts Prophet Nuh, who kept calling his son to board the ark even though the son refused and chose to remain with the disbelievers. Ibn Kathir identifies that son as Kan'an (called Yam in some reports), who was unwilling to board the ark and chose instead to take shelter on a mountain, until at last the waves separated him from his father and he was among those who drowned.²³ What is striking in this interpretation is that Prophet Nuh went on addressing his son with a term of endearment, "*yā bunayya*" ("O my dear son"), right up to the final moments amid the disaster—showing that a father's obligation to keep calling to his child and praying for him does not lapse even in the face of outright refusal. The narrative also carries an important theological lesson: guidance is not passed down automatically from father to son, even when the father is a prophet—an emphasis that serves to remind FMW fathers not to cease striving even when the results of their caregiving do not always match their hopes, and not to carry excessive guilt when their utmost efforts have yet to bear the desired fruit. In the context of FMW children who often display unruliness, low self-esteem, or withdrawal because of the absence of maternal guidance, the example of Prophet Nuh affirms that a father must not give up on a resistant child but must instead adapt his role—including taking on the gentleness usually associated with the mother's role—while accepting that the final outcome of caregiving lies beyond his full control.

3. The Example of Prophet Ibrahim: Dialogue and Consultation

²¹ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, 11:129.

²² Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, on the interpretation of QS. Luqman: 13.

²³ Hikmat bin Basyir bin Yasin, *Fathul Karim: Mukhtashar Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim* [Abridgment of Tafsir Ibn Kathir], on the interpretation of QS. Hud: 42–43, as published on TafsirWeb, "Surat Hud Ayat 42," accessed August 7, 2026, <https://tafsirweb.com/3534-surat-hud-ayat-42.html>.

QS. As-Saffat: 102 recounts Prophet Ibrahim inviting his son, Ishmael, to consult with him about the command of sacrifice he had received through a dream, rather than imposing his will. Tantawi Jauhari in *Tafsir al-Wasit* explains that the consultation Prophet Ibrahim undertook was meant to allow Ishmael to accept the command with inner readiness and patience, while also granting Prophet Ibrahim himself peace of mind as a father; further, Tantawi Jauhari explicitly contrasts this moment with the narrative of Kan'an—it is through such dialogue that a child's firmness of faith becomes visible, whether he will obey as Ishmael did or instead disobey as the son of Prophet Nuh did²⁴. The explicit contrast between these two narratives—Ishmael, who obeyed through dialogue, and Kan'an, who disobeyed even though he was called with affection—affirms that a sound method of caregiving (dialogue, consultation, and patience) is a condition the father must meet, yet not an absolute guarantee of the final outcome, because the choice of faith remains the child's own autonomy. Prophet Ibrahim's dialogical approach is pertinent to addressing the communication problems that form one of the principal challenges for FMW children, as research has found that children left behind by parental migration often shoulder a burden of household responsibilities that narrows their room for socializing with peers, giving rise to frustration and psychological pressure²⁵.

These three Qur'anic examples find their empirical relevance in a number of contemporary sociological studies of female migrant worker families, both in the Indonesian context and in transnational comparison. A case study in West Java found that, of 20 key informants from FMW families interviewed, the care of the children left behind was in fact taken up fully by the husband/father, who sought to provide the best care and education for their children—a finding that challenges the initial assumption that a mother's migration automatically means the child loses adequate care²⁶. Not all FMW families, however, yield positive experiences: research in Tulungagung, one of the largest sending areas for women migrant workers (TKW) in East Java, found that divorce occurring in migrant worker families has a significant impact on the mental health of young children, including heightened anxiety and emotional disturbance arising from the instability of the post-migration family structure²⁷.

Comparison with the regional context enriches this understanding. Parreñas's classic study of Filipino transnational families—one of the most influential references in the study of migration and the family—found that traditional gender ideology retained within migrant families in fact aggravates, and in some cases helps to create, the strains such families undergo, because the fathers who remain are

²⁴ Jauhari, *Tafsir al-Wasit*, on the interpretation of QS. As-Saffat: 102.

²⁵ Nelsensius Klau Fauk et al., "Parental Migration and the Social and Mental Well-Being Challenges among Indonesian Left-Behind Children: A Qualitative Study," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21, no. 6 (2024): 793, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21060793>.

²⁶ Mulyana, El Karimah, and Octavianti, "Parenting for Left-Behind Children."

²⁷ Nur Puji Ningrum and Anik Lestarinigrum, "Dampak Cerai-Gugat TKI/TKW Tulungagung pada Kesehatan Mental Anak Usia Dini" [The Impact of Divorce Petitions among Tulungagung Migrant Worker Families on the Mental Health of Young Children], *Abata: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 2, no. 1 (2022): 153–162.

often reluctant to take over fully a caregiving role still culturally regarded as the mother's domain²⁸. In keeping with this, the comparative study by Lam and Yeoh of Indonesia and the Philippines found that when it is the father who migrates to fulfill the breadwinning role, family caregiving arrangements tend to remain stable because the mother carries on her caregiving role; conversely, when it is the mother who migrates, the renegotiation of gender roles becomes far more complex and its outcomes depend heavily on the psychological readiness and social support the father receives as substitute caregiver²⁹.

The meeting point between textual and empirical inquiry yields an important proposition: an FMW father's success in carrying out the function of substitute caregiving is determined not by his physical presence alone but by the extent to which he is able to internalize three Qur'anic caregiving characters at once—counsel that is continuous and liberating (the example of Luqman), unconditional patience that does not hinge on results (the example of Prophet Nuh), and dialogue that builds the child's inner readiness rather than forced compliance (the example of Prophet Ibrahim). The absence of any one of these three characters, as reflected in the authoritarian, indifferent, or merely indulgent father types, correlates with less than optimal caregiving outcomes, as found in the divorce cases among migrant worker families in Tulungagung and in the strains of Filipino transnational families.

To answer the third research question, the Qur'anic example of fathering is brought together with the typology of five FMW father types identified in research in West Java, namely the intimate father, the flat/distant father, the authoritarian father, the indulgent father, and the indifferent father³⁰. Table 1 presents this mapping along with its practical implications.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of the Qur'anic Example of Fathering and the Typology of Female Migrant Worker Fathers

Qur'anic Narrative	Fathering Pattern	Relevant FMW Father Type	Practical Implication
Luqman (QS. Luqman: 13)	Continuous counsel; education in tawhid and moral character	Opposed to the indifferent father type	Making religious counsel a routine rather than an incidental activity
Prophet Nuh (QS. Hud: 42–43)	Patience and long-term responsibility even when the child refuses	Opposed to the flat/distant father type	The father does not give up on a resistant child; he takes on the gentleness of the mother's role
Prophet Ibrahim (QS. As-Saffat: 102)	Dialogue and consultation; valuing the child's opinion	Corresponds to the intimate and democratic father types; opposed to the authoritarian type	A dialogical approach to overcoming the communication difficulties of FMW children

²⁸ Parreñas, *Children of Global Migration*, 45.

²⁹ Lam and Yeoh, "Migrant Mothers, Left-Behind Fathers."

³⁰ Mulyana, El Karimah, and Octavianti, "Parenting for Left-Behind Children."

The table above shows that the three Qur'anic examples correspond conceptually to the intimate father and the democratic-dialogical father types, while standing in direct opposition to the indifferent and authoritarian types that risk worsening the psychosocial condition of FMW children. This finding provides grounds for holding that the shift in the father's role within FMW families is not a deviation from the Islamic family order but rather a realization of shared responsibility toward the child as a trust from Allah, in line with the perspective of gender justice in the family that emphasizes role flexibility between father and mother.

The novelty of this research lies in supplying an analytical framework that bridges two domains which have thus far developed apart from one another: normative tafsir studies of caregiving and sociological-empirical studies of migrant worker families³¹. This study thus complements the work of Santoso (2020) and Syarif (2018), which dwelt more on the legal dimension and the fulfillment of basic rights, by adding the dimension of textual exemplarity that can serve as a practical reference for FMW fathers in carrying out their role.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study reaches three conclusions. First, the Qur'an portrays fathering patterns through three principal dimensions confirmed across both the *bi al-ma'tsur* and the *bi al-ra'yi* modes of tafsir: counsel that is continuous and psychologically liberating (the example of Luqman), patience and unconditional responsibility that does not hinge on final outcomes (the example of Prophet Nuh), and a dialogical approach that builds the child's inner readiness (the example of Prophet Ibrahim). Second, the psychosocial condition of FMW children in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia is marked by an excessive burden of domestic responsibility, communication difficulties, and the risk of emotional strain, with substitute father typologies ranging from the intimate to the indifferent, while the success of substitute caregiving depends heavily on the father's psychological readiness and the stability of the household relationships that remain. Third, the Qur'anic example of fathering is conceptually relevant and applicable as a normative framework for FMW fathers, particularly in encouraging a shift from the authoritarian or indifferent father type toward the intimate and dialogical type.

This study carries the limitation of being a library study without primary field data, so that the comparative analysis put forward is conceptual in nature. Further research is recommended to use in-depth interviews with FMW fathers and children in order to test the relevance of this typology empirically, including comparing the experience of Indonesian FMW families with that of transnational families in other migrant-sending countries in Southeast Asia. In practical terms, this study recommends: (1) pre-departure preparation programs for prospective FMW fathers covering basic

³¹ Fauk et al., "Parental Migration."

caregiving skills and the psychological readiness to take over domestic roles; (2) periodic psychosocial support for FMW children provided by village/subdistrict governments; and (3) the strengthening of social protection policies for FMW families as a realization of the shared responsibility of the state, the family, and society toward the child as a trust from Allah.

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