



Young Muslim couples' experiences when having the first child: A narrative Inquiry

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the experience of several Muslim married couples when they have their first child. Some aspects that will be explored are related to feelings, expectations, and factors that support the views and practices of husbands and wives' parenting for their first child. This study applies a narrative inquiry approach by collecting data using a semi-structured interview technique, where the participants' narratives are analyzed thematically. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and a review of Islamic teachings are the references in the discussion of this study. The results show that the dynamics of emotions, expectations and strategies are carried out by each couple when they have their first child. This study contributes to the views and practices of Muslim married couples, as well as insight into the importance of cooperation, communication, and support from the social environment for married couples in facing the new experience of welcoming their first child into the family. This research involves young married couples from various cultures in Indonesia to see variations in emotional dynamics and forms of supports that can be used as a basis for further research.

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics of feelings, hopes, views, held by married couples and their practices related to the presence and parenting their first child. This research is useful as an insight for prospective parents, young married couples, and extended families to provide

mutual support in parenting their young children. The presence of children in the family is a happiness for married couples in general. However, young married couples' limited knowledge, skills and experience, especially when they have their first child, can pose challenges in responding to and carrying out parenting. It is understandable, considering that a young married couple is undergoing a transition to change in status to become a father and mother. Therefore, the topic in this study makes an essential contribution to understanding the dynamics of the experience that a married couple goes through in raising their first child.

In Islamic teachings, children are a trust, a gift, and a favour given by the Creator. The Quran explicitly states that children are adornment and trials in the world, they must be handled as well as possible (QS. Al-Anfal [8] : 28; QS. Al-Kahf [18] : 46; QS. At-Taghabun [64] : 15). Islam provides guidance related to the rights and obligations of parents towards children, such as reciting both *Adhan* and *Iqamah* into the ears of the newborn, performing *'Aqiqah/ Qurban* (Islamic tradition of the sacrifice of an animal), giving a good name (Bensaid et al., 2021) and breastfeeding children (QS. Al-Baqarah [2] : 233). Knowledge of parents about children's education from the time they are in the womb to providing exemplary care and education is also emphasized in Islamic teachings. In general, the virtues of seeking and increasing knowledge are also listed in the Quran surah Al Imran [3] :18, Surah Al-Ankabut [29] :43 and Surah Mujadila 58:11. Even the first verse that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad is related to the ability to "read" (QS. Al-Alaq [96] : 1-5).

In addition, Islamic teachings strongly encourage the importance of knowledge of prospective partners about the roles that husband and wife must carry out when married, including nurturing and educating children. Muslim married couples are also expected to have good insight and skills in dealing with the presence of children. In practice, positive and negative feelings can arise and color the lives of married couples, especially when they have their first child. Feelings of happiness with the presence of children sometimes interspersed with the emergence of a sense of worry, both when the wife is pregnant, giving birth, or caring for a baby. The presence of children demands parental responsibility related to parenting practices, division of tasks in the household, financial problems, and other things.

Various studies related to the experience of parenting by married couples have been carried out at the international, national, and local levels. The research involved physical, psychological (emotional-social), environment, gender, family background, and other factors. For example, research on brain structure and behavior between men and women by Eijket al., (2021) shows that there are differences in brain structure between the two, which impact behavioral differences. This situation is in line with studies by Brandelet al., (2018), and Wittenberg et al., (2017), which conclude that there are physical, psychological, and environmental differences (including social and cultural norms) that can affect the occurrence of differences in expectations and behavior between men and women. Studies related to maternal feelings during pregnancy, conducted by Poromaa et al.,(2017), prove that more tremendous changes in endocrine hormones in women cause the level of maternal depression during pregnancy to be doubled. This situation is not only influenced by gender but also by brain responsiveness which always develops based on age, socioeconomic level, and culture. In addition, Wierenga et al., (2018) reported that the level of variability of the male brain structure is wider than the female brain structure. This situation, at a particular time, will affect the level of cognition and personality of men and women. The existence of these physiological differences

causes the emergence of differences in attitudes, emotions, and responses of married couples in preparing for the birth of a child, as well as planning parenting and education for their children. The level of stress experienced by women during pregnancy will be overcome if they get support from the environment, especially partners and relatives (Novianti & Maria, 2019).

The Quran implicitly explains differences in attitudes and responses between men and women (QS Al Imran [3] : 40 & QS Al Imran [3] : 47), when the Prophet Zakaria Alayhissalaam and Maryam knew that Maryam would be blessed with a child. Prophet Zakaria Alayhissalaam used the term "ghulam" for children, while Maryam used the word "walad". These two words have different meanings, where "ghulam" refers to children (boys) aged 3-6 years, while "walad" describes children at every age, from birth to adulthood. In this context, it can be seen that women's responses are more long-term and focus on their responsibilities, while men's responses tend to be short-term and emphasize the element of fun with the birth of a child.

Differences in male and female responses were also investigated through differences in the level of welfare of a husband and wife at the beginning of their wife's pregnancy (Alam, 2020; Lou et al., 2017), as well as developments from early pregnancy until sometime after the wife gave birth (Liberska & Deja, 2021; Lou et al., 2017; Nelson-Coffey et al., 2019; Pearson et al., 2019). Some other researchers interpret the term welfare broadly. For example, research by Brandel et al., (2018) measures this well-being utilizing eudaimonic well-being, and research by Nelson-Coffey et al. (2019) and Hansen & Slagsvold (2012) who translate well-being as happiness and life satisfaction. The previous study by Castle et al. (2008) looked at the psychological side, such as improving psychological health and decreasing levels of depression. Brandel et al., (2018) distinguish welfare into two forms; eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. Eudaimonic well-being relates to self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, life goals, and self-development. In contrast, hedonic well-being refers to subjective well-being, including material existence and life satisfaction. In the transition as a parent, eudaimonic well-being tends to increase, while hedonic well-being will decrease.

A study related to differences in expectations between mothers and fathers towards children was carried out by Wittenberg et al., (2017), although their research did not focus on the first child in the family. They involved 126 married couples aged between 16 and 50 years (mean 30.4 years), with a maximum age of 8 years for children in their study. The study's results prove that there are different expectations between mothers and fathers for their children. Mothers tend to expect their children to be happy, to have relatively stable emotions, and to have their personal needs met. Meanwhile, fathers tend to value their children's achievements and personal responsibilities to achieve specific expected goals. This study did not show any differences in the expectations of both parents regarding the gender of their child. In fact, in contrast to the research results related to gender stereotypes in general, fathers have higher expectations of daughters than sons in terms of personal achievement and responsibility.

Nelson-Coffey et al., (2019) explore differences in the well-being of fathers and mothers in their child-rearing activities. The researchers used a variety of indicators of well-being, including subjective well-being (life satisfaction, positive emotions, negative emotions, busyness), depressive symptoms, state of happiness, the satisfaction of psychological needs, and stress. The results showed

that the increase in well-being due to being a father was consistently higher than being a mother. The change in the role of being a father has its satisfaction compared to when he did not have children. On the other hand, mothers reported lower well-being due to busyness and decreased positive emotions when having children. However, then there is a change in which mothers feel increased happiness when interacting with their children. These researchers explain that there are factors in the division of tasks in the family and the extension of the spouse's leave that affects their perceived well-being. The study concluded that sharing parenting tasks, where fathers are involved in parenting, can reduce the gender welfare gap between parents. In addition, the extension of parental leave from work can improve the welfare of mothers. The involvement of fathers in parenting and active participation has a positive impact on a child, one of which is the child's ability to adapt to social environment (Nurhani & Atika Putri, 2020).

Based on the various literature above, it can be seen that research on the experiences of married couples when they have children is studied in a relatively general context. In contrast, specific research on the experiences of married couples when they have their first child is relatively limited in number. In addition, study related to this topic is generally carried out in developed countries such as Western countries and Japan. Research in developing countries generally examine types of parenting (Petro et al., 2017), adaptation of parenting patterns according to community dynamics (Bensaid et al., 2021), and the influence of religious characteristics on parental satisfaction and stress.

More specifically, research on the experiences of Muslim married couples related to parenting which is based on religious value is still relatively limited. This motivates researchers to examine more deeply the experiences of Muslim married couples when they have their first child. The researcher wants to explore the feelings, attitudes, and expectations that married couples have when they find out that they will have their first child, and how they plan parenting for their child as they realize their role as the first educators for their children (Novita, 2018).

This study refers to psychological studies in describing the experiences of married couples who have a child for the first time. Ecological theory by Bronfenbrenner (1986) is the reference in the discussion of this study, as well as Islamic values (QS al Imran [3] : 40, 47) which contribute to the study of differences in responses between men and women in dealing with childbirth. Using different terminology in the two verses of the Qur'an is also the basis for consideration in this study. The researchers decided to use ecological theory Bronfenbrenner (1986) to understand more deeply the dynamics of the experience of Muslim married couples related to the presence of their first child, where their feelings, hopes, views, and practices cannot be separated from the context of their family parenting background, norms, social expectations and demands.

The basic concept of the theory is used as a basis that explains the existence of various levels or layers in the environment (microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems) that affect a person's views, and expectations, feelings, and behavior. The layers of environmental systems that influence each other include: (1) microsystems, immediate environments that include family, schools, peers, health services, religious groups, and others, (2) Mesosystem, the interaction between people in the microsystem, (3) exosystem, which are neighbors, social services, mass media, friends from family, local policies, and (4) macrosystem, which includes the attitudes and ideology of a culture. In addition to the four layers previously, there is a Chronosystem that includes events

in the environment, transitions in life, and socio-historical conditions. These various layers are related to the contributions and shared responsibilities of the various levels of the environment above concerning parenting. This study explores the dynamics of feelings, hopes, and views that married couples hold and their practices related to parenting their first child. The research is expected to contribute an insight for prospective parents, young married couples, and extended families to provide mutual support in parenting.

B. METHOD

1. Research Design

This study uses a narrative inquiry method with the consideration that it has advantages in exploring views about a person's experience, both individually and socially. A person's experience is a stored 'story,' where the individual colors his life from stories about himself and others and interprets the past through stories of his life experiences. In other words, this narrative study can reveal a person's life story that focuses on the subjective reality that is built through stories about life experiences (Lewis, 2019). In narrative inquiry, researchers have the assumption that participants with their experiences can provide enlightenment, views, or ideas about the dynamics of their life experiences related to the presence of their first child. The narrative inquiry method pays attention to several components in its implementation, namely the experience of participants over time, in various places, including social interaction relationships, where these components must be studied simultaneously (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). In other words, the narrative inquiry method holistically emphasizes the dimensions of space and time and the socio-cultural context that influences the complex and dynamic discourse of participant experience stories (Fridani et al., 2020).

2. Research Context

This study involved participants living in Jakarta's capital city and several cities in the Java region. The data collection of this research was carried out by two researchers who lived in the same area as the participants for the convenience of data collection. Research activities were carried out from October to December 2021.

3. Participant

The research participants were four Muslim married couples who had their first child. The age of the participants ranged between the ages of 20 - 30 years. The researchers' selection of these four participants was due to the factors of a relatively close relationship emotionally, in terms of relationships as colleagues and experience working together in the fields of education, community service, and other social activities. The emotional closeness between participants and researchers made it easier for participants to share experiences and challenges faced when having their first child with researchers. Thus, this good relationship will support the implementation of data collection, where mutual trust between researchers and participants has been fostered. In addition, body language and attitude are also maintained so that both parties feel comfortable.

4. Data Collection

Data collection using a semi-structured interview technique was carried out in three months. The semi-structured interview technique is flexible, allowing participants to answer questions in a free-flowing. It allowed the researcher to get a complete picture of the participants' experiences when they had their first child. In addition, the interview technique allows researchers to capture the implied emotions of the participants' gestures.

The interview process provides certainty about confidentiality, anonymity, and emotional comfort in expressing participants' experiences by telling stories (L. Harvey, 2015). In the interview process, participants can withdraw without any ties and consequences (Fridani et al., 2020; T. Harvey et al., 2017). Interviews were conducted using some application such as Zoom Meeting, VideoApps, and WhatsApp. The primary consideration of using the application is an effort to comply with the protocol during the pandemic and considerations of time and distance efficiency. Some of these media use is based on an agreement between the researcher and the participants. After both parties agreed on the interview media, the researcher and the participants agreed on the interview schedule.

At the beginning of the interview, the researchers asked for participants' consent to share their experiences of having their first child. In addition, the researchers asked for consent to record the process during the interview. The research topic was divided into several sub-topics; dynamics of feelings that arise when they first have children, expectations of the gender of the child, division of husband-and-wife duties, and support from the family. Interview results are stored in the form of historical notes and written notes.

The results of the interviews were in the form of qualitative data, which were then analyzed and studied to get the essence and essential explanations that became the focus of answers from participants. The researcher contacted the participants to re-confirm the essential matters through WhatsApp for things that are not clear. The interview process for each married couple takes about 60 to 90 minutes.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discussion in this study refers to the theory of ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), which views individual development as a complex system of relationships that is influenced by the surrounding environment, starting from the immediate environment or context in the family, society, to cultural values, norms, laws, and prevailing customs. Related to this study, the narrative of each a married couple will be discussed in the framework of an ecological concept. The narratives of the participants were analysed thematically and four themes related to the dynamics of the couple's experience are obtained as follows: (1) The dynamics of feelings that arise when they have their first child; (2) Expectations of a particular child's gender; (3) Agreement on the division of tasks within the family; (4) Support from family, relatives, or household assistants.

1. The dynamics of feelings that arise when having the first child

Several researchers (Evans & Gary, 2004; Neuman & Celano, 2001) have proven that a person's psychological, emotional, and physical characteristics can directly or indirectly affect the condition of families and children. In the context of this study, a relatively stable physical and psychological condition of husband and wife and good communication between the two will be able to support the couple's emotions to be positive. All married couples in this study generally expressed their feelings of pleasure and gratitude to Allah, God Almighty, when they received the mandate to have their first child. As individuals who are Muslim and have a parenting background from a family that teaches noble values (for example, expressions of gratitude and praise to Allah), the participants expressed happiness, felt that they had received a pleasant surprise, and expressed gratitude to their partners for the support provided. As some couples say:

I am delighted and very grateful; the presence of this child is eagerly awaited in our little family.... (Husband A).

Alhamdulillah, this is the first time I was given the trust to have children.... in the 3rd month of marriage, we received news from the doctor's examination that I was pregnant (Wife A).

I'm happy because this is according to plan. Previously, we had consulted with the doctor because the wife had not been pregnant for a while. (Husband C).

I didn't think so before. We are indeed in preparation for having children... If I don't target when to have children, it just depends on what God has given us (Wife C).

This kind of expression is commonly expressed by couples, especially those with children for the first time, where the presence of children is a condition that deserves to be celebrated. Even though, on the one hand, the birth of their first child can be a new challenge, feelings of happiness and gratitude become an encouragement for married couples facing various future childcare problems. Referring to the Ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1986), at the macrosystem layer, the expressions of feelings of husband and wife towards the presence of children are all associated with the religious values adopted, where gratitude and praise are associated with gifts, favors, and trusts from Allah, the Creator.

However, in addition to expressions of happiness and gratitude, worries and doubts about facing future challenges also appear in couples, as stated below:

"in the early days after giving birth, I was more worried, even experienced the baby blues. I don't dare to be at home alone with the baby. Everything has to be handled alone" (Wife B).

I've also felt panicked; this has something to do with the response from family or other people who sometimes interfere because they think they have more experience. Even though we have also read several parenting references and want to raise children according to our way (Husband B).

Actually, I was surprised at the beginning. Was it true that my status changed to being a mother who had to take care of children and all other tasks... so I was in shock, not immediately happy? But I gave up. I lived the days to survive..... when the baby was a few months old. I had panicked again because of the problem of the baby's lack of weight.... while I had to go back to work. (Wife D).

When I heard that my wife was pregnant, I was thrilled. But I realized there was still a long way to go, so I could barely hold back the happy response, can the wife be healthy until the time of delivery, and whether the child is also healthy both physically and mentally. (Husband D).

Feelings mixed between happiness and worry are natural for married couples in welcoming the presence of children. Moreover, young married couples generally have limited skills in parenting because they do not have experience etc. Young couples' idealism to provide the best for their children also appears, along with the worry if their plans and hopes are not achieved. Anxiety can sometimes progress to fear or panic that occurs occasionally and is influenced by various factors such as health, perspective, limitations in parenting skills, environmental demands, financial problems, and so on, as stated by the following couples:

"I am personally a typical person who tends to over think something. I am worried about whether what I give to my child is under religious teachings. Whether my child can have an excellent character in the future, and how we as working couple have to manage our tasks. But in this case, my husband provides support. He is the one who understand my mood; the most patient person who can solve problems and make me feel comfortable." (Wife A).

Feelings of confusion, worry, panic, fear, it happened. This feeling arises because, indeed, we are facing new things. I've also been worried about not being a good father when I first held the baby, bathed the baby and so on. I am concerned about hurting my son. But together with my wife, all worries become more under control, and we strengthen each other." (Husband A).

I am afraid I will not be able to care for and raise my children properly. I am scared of my child's future; how will she attend school? How about school fees? How about the school environment? Is it good or not for my child's development? And how to prevent my child from being affected by an unsupportive environment? (Wife B).

My concern is more about feeling uncomfortable with families and other people's responses who sometimes interfere and protest us in raising our child. (Husband B).

I don't seem to be panicking but just worried about health problems; I had issues with body aches and itchy skin, due to the influence of hormones during pregnancy. Moreover, I have to work and sometimes take public transportation, but later I was driven to work by car with my husband (Wife C).

When my wife was pregnant, I was a little worried, especially when the baby in the womb was underweight. But we routinely check with the doctor, then we start to feel calm, go with the flow... more comfortable. (Husband C).

Feeling panic about children's growth and development, how to keep the environment hygienic, avoid viruses, think about choosing good food and milk for children. (Wife D).

I feel more concerned about financial problems. I have to have a better career, work harder, and be able to accommodate my wife's and children's needs and give them the best. I really set my goals a little higher. I want to live comfortably... I've also panicked about children's health, for example, when my baby often spits up in the beginning. In fact, since my wife was pregnant in the 7th month, we took lessons in bathing the baby, holding the baby, and also buying some books for reference. (Husband D).

The stress experienced in applying parenting to children is a psychological reaction that appears as an attempt to adapt to the demands or roles of parents. Harmon (2011) show a relationship

between parental stress and problems with family income, relationships within the family, and family function. A previous study by Cain and Combs-Orme ((2005) proved a link between the stress experienced by a mother and the involvement of her partner in parenting. The narratives presented by the married couples above show that a dynamic feeling occurs, which is a mixture of happiness and worry. There are even couples who panic or experience stress. When a wife or husband feels panicked and depressed, negative thoughts usually accompany them, that creates doubt about their ability to do their role as a parent. Studies about stress on mothers related to the feeling of competency problems mention above, have been studied by some experts, such as Leerkes and Burney (2007) as well as Raikes and Thompson (2005).

2. Expectations of a specific child gender

Stories given by some couples about their expectations for the sex of their child generally do not indicate a priority to a particular gender. The husband and wife in this study link their hopes and submit them to the will of the Almighty. It is inseparable from the background of their religious beliefs as Muslims. They are more concerned with the health of children than a particular gender. The following is an expression of hope for a married couple:

We surrender it to Allah; it is up to Him to give us a child with certain gender. Our hope is, we want our child to be a good child (Wife D).

I just refer it to religious teachings; to be sincere, we depend on what God has given, the important thing is that the child is healthy (Husband D).

However, extended family expectations also affect married couples' hopes when they have their first child. Referring to the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1986) at the microsystem and mesosystem layers, couples expect a particular gender in children based on their respect for the expectations of a large family, which will be passed on to offspring. Some couples consider having a child with specific gender because the gender in their big families is still very limited in number. In addition, some couples expect a specific child gender with the hope that the child can help their parents or take care of their younger siblings in the future. The following are expressions of hope for some of these married couples:

As we approached the wedding, we had planned pregnancy by consuming specific milk hoping that it is a good nutrition and give chance to have a baby boy. Because in my extended family, there are fewer boys than girls (Wife A).

Incidentally, my wife and I have the same desire to have a baby boy. We hope that our son can help his mother in the future (Husband A).

Regarding the gender of our child, I hope to have a baby girl so that she can help me one day when she has a brother or sister (Wife B).

I don't care if I have a baby girl or baby boy. The important thing is to be grateful. But my big family hope is to have a baby girl, because we come from matrilineal family, we want to continue the clan's name. (Wife C).

There is a tendency I want a baby girl for certain reason. It is fate that we have a baby boy, we accept that and love him (Husband C).

The married couples' expectations of a particular child gender by taking into account the expectations of the extended family, show the nature of togetherness in the context of society and culture in Indonesia. Care and education provided by the family, customs in society, traditions, and norms that apply have an enormous influence on the individual's perspective, including in expressing one's hopes (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

3. Agreement on the division of tasks within the family

All married couples in this study stated that they did not have a rigid agreement on the division of tasks in the family, especially from when the wife was pregnant until giving birth. The couples do not have a written agreement, but they have verbal agreement which is flexible. This condition is indeed common in the context of Indonesian society in general, where cultural factors, traditions, and religious values influence individual decisions. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological theory, people's attitudes and perspectives which are located at the macrosystem layer, indirectly contributes to their perspective and ways of making decisions. The following is a couple's expression about the division of tasks in the family:

There is no written division task in our household. Over time, we automatically do the tasks that we can do alternately, and we do it until now. For example, I bathe my children, cook, iron and wash clothes. We do it together, sweep the house and take care of the garden as well. My husband also helps prepare our child's toiletries and wash clothes and dishes (Wife A)

There is no agreement because children are not a burden but the family's hope in the future, so my wife and I take turns and complement each other to take care of our children (Husband A)

Actually, there is no agreement in our household about task division. But, for 2.5 months, I couldn't do much activity. My husband was in charge of things, such as shopping, cleaning equipment, preparing litter boxes for cats, and accompanying me at midnight while breastfeeding my baby. For other work, it just flow (Wife C).

I took a few days off before and after my wife gave birth. So I can shop, clean, and wash clothes (Husband C).

Along with the increasing demands of life, many wives continue to work outside the home even though they have babies. This choice or decision will affect the welfare or happiness of a wife/mother in carrying out her role in the family. A study by Shloim (2015) on perceptions of motherhood are varied related to some aspects such as individual perceptions, culture and country of origin. Thus agreement, good communication, and mutual respect for partners play a crucial role in achieving harmony in the family. The following is an agreement made by a husband and wife where the wife decides to play a dominant role in financial matters for a while:

We have an agreement that my husband takes care of the child. My husband has a screen-printing business at home, so he can be flexible in managing his work after my maternity leave, my husband was more focused on taking care of the baby than running his business. We agreed on this until the child entered kindergarten. So, while I am the primary source of income in the family because I have a permanent job (Wife B).

We agreed to share the task. I cared for the house and the child until he is 5 years old, while thinking about efforts that I could make to support the family's economy (Husband B).

Cooperation between partners also determines stability in the household. Raising children is not always the responsibility of the wife alone, but the husband's involvement in domestic tasks and parenting is required. This agreement can undoubtedly be reached when each partner has sensitivity and empathy for the needs of his partner. The following are expressions of a married couple who agree to support each other:

We help each other. When I was pregnant, my condition was not healthy; I often had nausea and vomiting. After giving birth, I also need to rest. After breastfeeding, I usually fall asleep, and my husband looks after and play with the baby (Wife D).

I previously worked in a baby milk company. I also handled child development. I have a vision, ideally what kind of future my child wants to be, although if it doesn't become like that, that's okay too. My father's role was fully served by my mother. As far as I remember, my father never handled children (Husband D).

Research by Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) shows that women generally tend to be more responsible for carrying out domestic tasks and caring for children, while men are more involved in family finances. Subsequent studies by Stier (2010) proved similar conditions where women usually serve more in the family and play a significant role in domestic affairs. The study does not differ from the context experienced by mothers in Indonesia. Over time, the division of tasks in several families can be carried out according to the conditions of each family.

4. Support from family/relatives/household assistant

In Indonesian society that values togetherness, the role of the extended family is vital in providing physical, psychological, social, and financial support. As referred to in ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), this tradition is passed down across generations, where grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and other relatives provide mutual support for those in need. In the context of a young married couple who have just had children, they need help from extended family, relatives, or community members in their environment in facing new challenges, especially in carrying out domestic tasks and parenting. Not all young couples have direct experience handling babies. It is also true in Asian cultures, where a shared orientation plays an important role, and family members are responsible for supporting or assisting other family needs. In other words, harmony in the family is upheld, and sacrifice of individual rights for the good of the family is expected (Quek et al., 2011)

Participants in this study had working conditions, health backgrounds, and other factors that influenced the level of need for support from family or other parties in caring for children. Some of the couples in this study lived separately from their parents, so the husband and wife tried to manage time and share tasks in parenting. However, couples who live with their parents because they work receive intensive support from parents and babysitters in their daily parenting practices. The following is the narrative of a married couple regarding the support they receive from the family and household assistants:

Alhamdulillah, when my husband and I were working, my retired mother took care of our child. After work, we take care of our children alone. Incidentally, for now we don't have a household assistant (Wife A).

Currently, there is no one to help us. At first, my cousin had time to help because she was studying online. She washes, cooks rice and looks after the children. Because I work, I am supported by my mother, and in the third month, there is a babysitter who can help us heating milk, put the child to sleep. Sometimes we go for walks, so we don't get stressed (Wife B).

We live in the in-laws' house who also has grandchildren... and they are close in age... they know the practice of babysitting. There is also a nurse, but her work is more operational. (husband B).

From the experiences given by the participants of the married couples above, it can be seen that there is some supports from extended families, relatives or community member to help young married couples do domestic work and take care of their children. The support given, especially to young couples who have to work can significantly provide comfort for the couples, especially wives with multiple roles. Ruderman et al.,(2002) reported that, in general, mothers who have multiple tasks (work outside the home) get much support, including social support and other facilities.

D. CONCLUSION

This study is an initial study on the dynamics of the experience of a Muslim married couple when they have their first child, so it has limitations in the information gathered. Thus, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other Muslim couples. However, this study makes a real contribution to the dynamics of emotions, expectations, views, and practices of young couples with the presence of their first child in the family in specific contexts. This study also emphasizes the role of the extended family, norms, religious values, and traditions that become the reference for married couples in facing the challenges of playing the role as new parents. Based on the results of this preliminary study, it is hoped that readers will gain enlightenment to increase sensitivity in supporting families of young couples in carrying out their responsibilities. Future research is expected to involve young couples from other different cultures in Indonesia to see variations in emotional dynamics and forms of support given by partner, extended families, and society.

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