

Social Support of Toba-Bataknesse Mothers in Children's Education

Rahma Fauzia, Meutia Naully, Ridhoi Meilona Purba

Department of Clinical Psychology

Faculty of Psychology

University of Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

rahma.fauzia@usu.ac.id, tianauly@gmail.com, ridhoi.purba@gmail.com

Abstract—Toba-Bataknesse women known as hard workers, have a major contribution towards their children's education. As Toba-Bataknesse people who have three goals of life as cultural mission which are *hagabeon* (blessed by heredity), *hamoraon* (wealth), and *hasangapon* (honor), they believed education is the only way to reach "the glory of life". Their child who has a good education is the most precious treasure (*anakkokin do hamoraon di ahu*). This study try to reveal the social support of Toba-Bataknesse mothers in order to make sure their children to have the good education. Toba-Bataknesse mothers (N=136) in Medan filled out questionnaire with open-ended questions developed from social support theory by Sarafino. There are four types social support: emotional/esteem support, tangible/instrumental support, informational support, and companionship support. This study used the quantitative method, all the responses were categorized and then analyzed by using cross tabulation statistical methods. The result showed that most of Toba-Bataknesse mothers were having difficulty in providing school's funding, especially in low income family with more than one child. The most social support received is tangible/instrumental support from the Toba-Bataknesse mother's clan (female line). This finding is interesting knowing the Toba-Bataknesse has patrilineal kinship system that so dominant that can be traced through the male line. The informational support received in form of some advices, and the companionship support received in form of helping them to taking care of their children. This study didn't showed any of emotional/esteem support received by Toba-Bataknesse mothers.

Keywords—social support; Toba-Bataknesse mothers; children's education

INTRODUCTION

In general, women are more often oriented towards the domestic realm, although in the progress of women is also expected to be in the public domain due to various reasons. Economic conditions is one strong reason for women to be in the public realm, eventhough the roles within the public are often considered an extension of the domestic under appreciated role in many society. Various studies have revealed the existence of a patriarchal culture that believes men are superior and women inferior that used to justify men to dominate and control women. This is in line with Walby (1990) that defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

The Toba-Bataknesse has patrilineal kinship system that so dominant that can be traced through the male line. Men as the main actor control various

areas in life, including in marital life, law, inheritance, and land ownership; while women seems to be living at the hands of men. On the other side, there happen to be a paradox since the Toba-Bataknesse women known as hard workers in meeting the household life, they do whatever necessary either as farmers, cultivators and small traders (*parengge-rengge*), or as informal traders *inang-inang*). Toba-Bataknesse women have a significant role for the family survival and contribute fairly prominent for their children's education (Baiduri, 2014).

As Toba-Batak people who have three goals of life as cultural mission which are *hagabeon* (blessed by heredity), *hamoraon* (wealth), and *hasangapon* (honor), they believed education is the only way to reach "the glory of life". Their child who has a good education is the most precious treasure (*anakkokin do hamoraon di ahu*). The implication they will work the hardest they can to send their children to school (Harahap and Hotman, 1987; Irmawati, 2007; Napitupulu, 2011; Baiduri, 2014)

In order to make sure their children to have a good education, the Toba-Batakese mothers, like any mothers, would face many problems and need supports from their family or community. Supports from others could be stated as social support, as social support defined as the action of help from others to the person in times of need. There are four types of social support: (1) emotional or esteem support that provides comfort and reassurance with a sense of belongingness and of being loved in times of stress, it includes sense of empathy, caring, concern, positive regard, and encouragement toward the person; (2) tangible or instrumental support in form of direct assistance; (3) informational support in form of suggestion, feedback, and advice; and (4) companionship support by giving a feeling of membership in group such as spending time with the person (Sarafino, 2011).

Therefore, this study try to reveal the social support of Toba-Batakese mothers received to help them to overcome problems in their children's education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Participants

Participants in this study included 145 Toba-Batakese mothers live in Medan, but nine of them were excluded because of not completed the whole questions.

The total income per month of the participants is ranging from under Rp 2.000.000 to Rp 20.000.000: 37% under Rp 2.000.000 per month, 44% Rp 2.000.000 – Rp 4.000.000 per month, 30% Rp 4.000.000 – Rp 6.000.000 per month, 21% Rp 6.000.000 – Rp 10.000.000 per month, and 4% Rp 10.000.000 – Rp 20.000.000 per month.

The number of children they have ranging between one to five children: 29% having one child, 45% having two children, 20% having three children, 18% having four children, and 24% having five children.

B. Questionnaire

The questionnaire in this study developed from social support theory by Sarafino (2011) in form of six open-ended questions. All of the participants' responses to open-ended questions were typed into master list, and then all the responses were categorized into several theme.

C. Data Analysis

Based on the themes that emerged in categorization, statistical analysis using cross tabulation were performed in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Main Problem in Children's Education

The result shows that most of Toba-Batakese mothers were having difficulty in providing school's funding (67.65%), especially in low income family with more than one child.

Other problems related with difficulty managing time between working and taking care of the children, facing the children that have low motivation to go to school because their teachers gave them lots of school assignment.

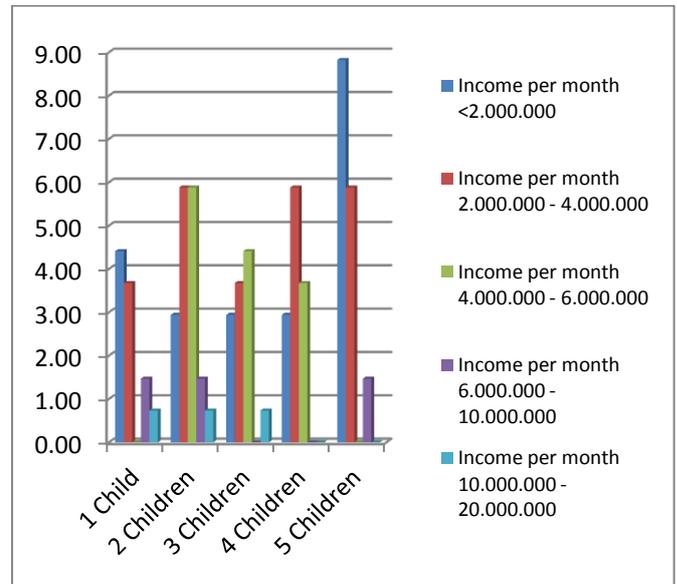


Fig. 1. Difficulty in school's funding

B. Social Support of Toba-Batakese Mothers

The most social support received by Toba-Batakese mothers is instrumental support in form of money, jobs, and school supplies (71.3%). The informational support received in form of some advices and sharing experiences (27.2%), and the companionship support received in form of helping them to taking care of their children (8.1%).

The interesting finding is this study find 0% of emotional support received by Toba-Batakese

mothers. According to the anthropologist, Pelly (personal communication, 2016), Toba-Batakese people internalized sense of competitiveness since childhood, they have the desire “to be number one” in everything they do. The implication of this sense of competitiveness was they have to dissemble their affection side, hoping they could push their weakness to the lower level in order to be the number one. They always have what Pelly called “*creedo*” (“cry the heart out”), because if they failed in one aspect of life they would get mocked by the society, even by their own family. It’s not appropriate to show the weakness. If they failed in doing something, then they have to try even harder to accomplish it. Therefore they see problems in their life as something which must be passed, it’s forbidden to break down and cry over it.

That is why Toba-Batakese people didn’t good in expressing their feeling to others, not because they didn’t have empathy toward others, but simply because they were trained to believe that if they showed empathy toward others, it would make other getting more weak to overcome the problems. However, we do need future research to confirm this explanation.

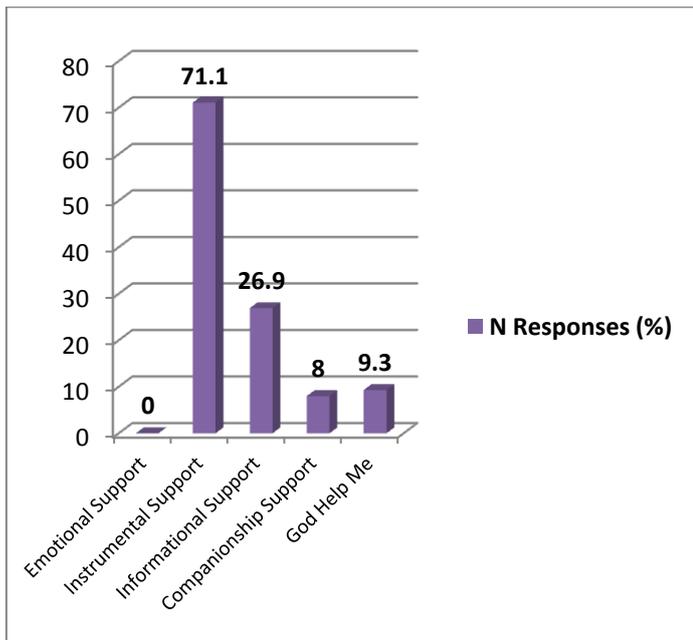


Fig. 2. Social support of Toba-Batakese mothers

C. Source of Social Support

This study reveal that most social support received is from the female line, which is the Toba-Batak mothers’s clan (65.4%), while the social support received from the male line only 14%. This finding is interesting knowing the Toba-Batakese has patrilineal kinship system that so dominant that can be traced through the male line. Pelly point out that in Toba-Batakese, since childhood the female line became the assistance parties when they were facing problems. The mother’s clan is seen as the “comfort place” when life become unbearable. Instead of “running” to the father’s clan who would mocked them, they “run” to the mother’s clan (personal communication, 2016).

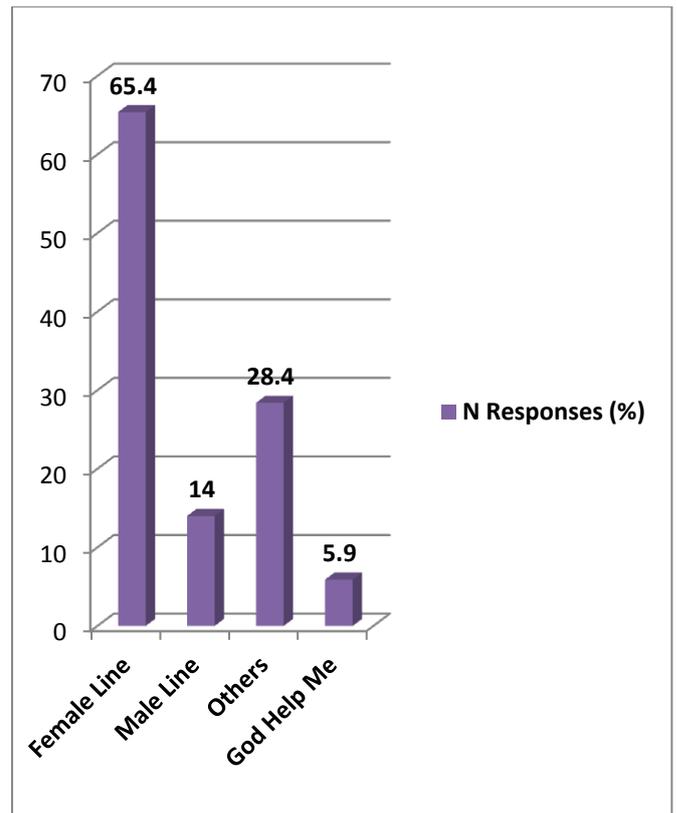


Fig. 3. The significant assistance

This study also reveal the Toba-Batakese mothers receive the social support from people outside their family (28.4%). According to Pelly, the Toba-Batakese worship the friendship they have (*rajani dongan*), they would do everything to help their friends (personal communication, 2016).

Another interesting finding in this study is the Toba-Bataknesse mothers seek help from God (5.9%). They believed God will give them what they need to solve their problems. Christianity is the majority religion of Toba-Batak people, there is synergistically relation between cultural values and religion in Toba-Bataknesse people. However, future research is needed to reveal this finding.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study cannot be generalized to all of Toba-Bataknesse mothers, we need more future researches to elaborate this study by increasing the number of samples. We also suggest for the future research to conduct a comparative study between Toba-Bataknesse mothers in rural and urban areas to have the bigger picture about Toba-Bataknesse mothers in children's education.

This study found two interesting findings that needed to be explored through future researches. First, this study didn't showed any of emotional/esteem support received by Toba-Bataknesse mothers. We questioning this finding whether this is because the character of Toba-Bataknesse people or there are other reasons. Therefore, we need to do future research to confirm the explanation. Second, we found that the significant assistance are from their mother's clan (female line) and their friends, but we can not yet make a solid conclusion about the role of the father's clan (male line) in children's education. The finding is very interesting knowing the Toba-Batak has patrilineal kinship system that so dominant that can be traced through the male line. We suggest for the future researchers to study the role of Toba-Bataknesse fathers (male line) in children's education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Authors would like to thank University of Sumatera Utara for giving us a chance to conduct a research through TALENTA funding. We would also like to show our gratitude to Professor Usman Pelly,

Ph.D and Dr. Ratih Baiduri, M.Si for sharing their pearls of wisdom about Toba-Bataknesse culture with us during the course of this research.

REFERENCES

- Baiduri, R. (2014). The Meaning And Dimensions of Work: Women Traders Toba-Batak (*Inang-Inang*) in Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 4 (1), pp. 66-74.
- Harahap, B., Hotman, M. S. 1987. *Orientasi Nilai-nilai Budaya Batak Suatu Pendekatan Terhadap Prilaku Toba-Batak Angkola-Mandailing*. Jakarta: Sanggar Willem Iskandar.
- Irmawati. (2007). Nilai-nilai yang Mendasari Motif-motif Penentu Keberhasilan Suku Batak Toba (Studi Psikologi Ulayat). *Dissertation*. Program Pascasarjana Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Indonesia.
- Napitupulu, V. M. (2011). *Pendidikan sebagai Faktor Dinamisasi dan Integrasi Sosial dalam Masyarakat Tapanuli Utara: Pemikiran tentang Batak Setelah 150 Tahun Agama Kristen di Sumatera Utara*. Jakarta: yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Sarafino, E. P., Smith, T. W. (2011). *Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interaction* (7th ed). USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell.