Does Having Single or Both Parents Impact the Sustainability of Schooling for Students Aged 7–18 in Indonesia?

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Abstract

The problem of dropping out of school continues to overshadow the sustainability of schooling for 7–18-year-olds in Indonesia. Having the support of both parents plays a vital role in supporting the sustainability of children's education. This study aims to analyze the effect of the presence of parents (both parents or one parent) on the probability of schooling sustainability among 7–18-year-old students. This research uses data from SUSENAS 2019 and PODES 2019. The study was carried out using descriptive analysis and binary logistic regression. The results of this study indicate that the presence of both parents has a significant and positive effect on the probability of schooling sustainability for 7–18-year-olds. It is necessary to strive for potent family resilience to achieve the sustainability of schooling for students aged 7–18. These efforts can be made through more intense and comprehensive socialization and outreach on issues relating to family resilience for the whole family. This outcome can be achieved by developing activities that can strengthen the roles of both parents in supporting the sustainability of their children's schooling, either through financial or social support.

Keywords

Introduction

As Indonesia is the world's fourth-largest country by population after China, India, and the United States, developing its human resources should be a top priority. At the international level, education development is contained in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure everyone has access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (Bappenas & UNICEF, 2017). The state guarantees the right to obtain an education in Indonesia through the Law on the National Education System (No. 20/2003) concerning the National Education System (President of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003). An education development program is also one of the Nine Priority Agendas, or Nawacita of the Government of Indonesia included in the formulation of Medium-Term National Development Plan IV (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional [RPJMN]) for 2020–2024. Educational development in this period aims to ensure that every citizen can obtain 12 years of compulsory education and is supported by the implementation of the PIP [Program Indonesia Pintar].

Nonetheless, the quality of Indonesian education was eleventh from the bottom in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) international test rankings (Sahyar et al., 2019), suggesting that the quality of Indonesian human resources needs to improve. The demographic bonus predicted to be experienced by Indonesia in 2020–2035 can only be capitalized upon if its human resources are high quality and internationally competitive. The role of the current school-age population is essential because it forms part of the population that will take advantage of the opportunities offered by the demographic bonus; thus, those of school age should be actively supported in obtaining an education. However, it is known that the higher the age group, the lower the level of school participation.

Dropping out of school is a global problem and threatens education systems in many countries (UNESCO, 2015). The Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategic Plan targets a dropout rate of only 1% at each level of education, elementary, junior high, and high school. In 2018, the government disbursed PIP funds amounting to 9.3 trillion IDR (607 million USD) to around 17.9 million elementary, junior high, and high school students in all provinces in Indonesia. Despite their size, these PIP funds have not been able to reduce dropout rates at the national level significantly. In 2017–2018, the dropout rates for elementary, junior high, and high schools decreased by only 0.02%, 0.09%, and 0.41%, respectively (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Dropout Rates for Elementary Schools, Junior High Schools, and High Schools 2016–2018 (%)
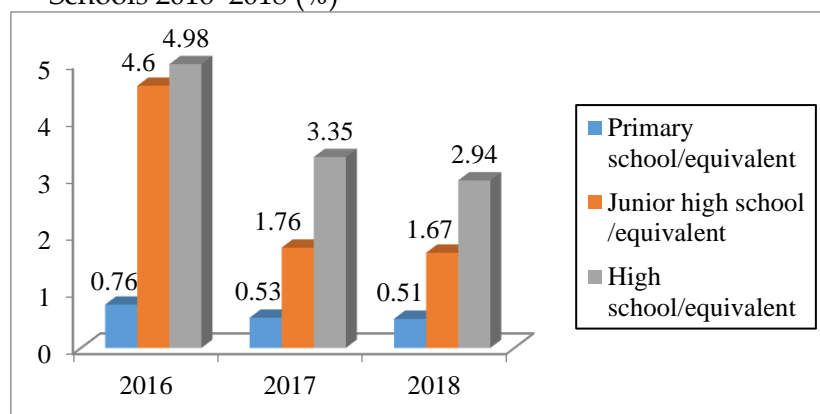
Several factors can influence the decision to continue or drop out of school. Umar (2015) noted that the parent's role is vital in determining the success of children's education. Syahroni (2017) revealed that parents and schools need to cooperate synergistically in the educational development of children. The vital role of the family has led the Government of Indonesia to implement a family-resilience strengthening program by pioneering a Family Resilience Index approach since 2016. One of its goals is to reduce Indonesia's annually increasing divorce rate, the highest among Asian Pacific countries. Divorce often creates single parents who take on the dual role of caring for their children and earning a living to support their children. This dual role means that children sometimes lack parental attention and support.

The presence of both parents maximizes the accumulation of resources in the family (parental capital) consisting of both social and material capital. The presence of both parents has the potential to create better material capital/financial resources and social capital (both in the family and community spheres) for the educational development of children than is typical in single-parent families (Becker, 1973). The ecological theory presented by Bronfenbrenner (1977) also stated that differences in family structure (single mother, single father, or two parents) create different parenting styles for children. Belsky (1984) developed a process model based on Bronfenbrenner's thinking, according to which parenting behavior and children's characteristics will affect children's development.

The family as a social system cannot function normally if the family structure is incomplete, so one or more family members cannot carry out their duties and functions. As a system, if one or more family members cannot carry out their duties and functions within the family, causing family dysfunction. Family dysfunction is the system of family conditions that cannot function properly. In this case, the structure and organization of the family is the main factor in family functioning, namely in influencing and determining the behavior of family members. Puspitawati (2012) revealed that the division of roles between husband and wife in carrying out family functions does not only include cleaning the house, cooking, washing clothes, and the like others but also includes caring for children, such as accompanying children to study and play. Attention, affection, and parenting style applied by parents to children will affect the growth and development of children in the future. Therefore, cooperation between husband and wife is needed to maintain togetherness with children. Moreover, parenting is not lag, so family resilience is created.

Growing up in an incomplete/one-parent family certainly affects the condition of children, especially regarding the sustainability of their education. In their research, Cahyani et al. (2019) revealed that lack of attention from parents is one of the factors leading to children dropping out of school. The influence of family structure on the sustainability of children's schooling was also shown by the research of Pong and Ju (2000), Lyche (2010), Song et al. (2012), Yi et al. (2015), Farah and Upadhyay (2017), and Afia et al. (2019). Likewise, Pong and Ju (2000) explained the relationship between family structure and the risk of dropping out of school. The results of this study are children who are in households that experience changes in family structure (initially living with complete parents to only living with father/mother/guardians other than father and mother) during 1988–1992 have a risk of dropping out of school two to three bigger than children with complete parents. Family structure (complete parents or single parent) and parental involvement affect the sustainability of children's schooling (Lyche, 2010). Song et al. (2012) also explained that adolescents from non-traditional households (single mother/stepmother, single father/stepfather) have a higher chance of dropping out of school than adolescents from a family with complete parents.

In line with Yi et al. (2015), in China's Technical and Vocational Education and Training High Schools, the probability of dropping out of school was smaller for children with complete parents compared to children whose parents are not at home due to migrating to cities to work. Farah and Upadhyay (2017) also analyzed the effect of household and social characteristics on dropout rates in Bangladesh. The results of this study indicated that children from poor and low-educated parents, children from a family with more than three children, or household members of more than five people are at risk of dropping out of school earlier or sooner. Afia et al. (2019) also conducted a study to analyze the quality of parenting practices (supervision and support) during the year before youth dropped out of school in Canada. The results of this study explained that most dropping out of school children live in families where communication and supervision are minimal.

This study aims to analyze the effect of the nature of the parental unit (complete/both parents or incomplete/single parent) on the probability of sustained school attendance in the population aged 7–18 years. The research results are expected to add new knowledge and literature to population science regarding the effect of completeness of parental units on the sustainability of education among the school-age population of Indonesia. The results of this study are also expected to provide scientific input into the formulation of policies in the field of education, particularly in maintaining the sustainability of school attendance for 7–18-year-olds, both for preventing school dropouts and as material for evaluating the results of Indonesia's developments in the education sector.

Methodology

This study utilized secondary data derived from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), namely the SUSENAS [Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional] 2019 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019b) and PODES [Potensi Desa] 2019 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019a). The SUSENAS March 2019 data was chosen because it provides information about community socio-economic conditions, which are used to create various achievement indicators in improving people's welfare. Meanwhile, the PODES 2019 data was used to obtain information on the accessibility of educational facilities.

In this study, the dependent variable from the SUSENAS 2019 data was the schooling sustainability status of the population aged 7–18 years (i.e., those still in school and those no longer attending school even though they have not graduated at a certain level of education). Meanwhile, the independent variable was the status of the parental unit (both/complete parents or single/incomplete parents). Control variables were used to avoid the omitted variable problems identified from the literature review, namely gender, receipt of PIP, disability, residence area, household head's education, the main occupation of the household head, and the number of household members. One of the control variables was the percentage of villages with schools per district, which was obtained from the PODES 2019 data (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019a).

The unit of analysis in this study was the sample aged 7–18 years who had the status of children in the sample households in the SUSENAS data (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019b). The number of residents aged 7–18 years who related to the head of the household as children was 240,122 people (86.29%) out of a total of 279,903 residents aged 7–18 years. The selection of the unit of analysis for residents aged 7–18 years with status as children were to focus more on seeing the effect of the presence of parents (complete parents and incomplete parents) on the sustainability of schooling for students aged 7–18 years as the aim of this study. Meanwhile,

the determination of the age range of the population refers to the school-age population at the elementary, junior high, and high school education levels.

Table 1: Research Variables and Variable Categorization

No. (1)	Research Variables (2)	Categories (3)
The Dependent Variable		
1	The schooling sustainability status of the population aged 7–18 years	1. Those still in school 2. Those no longer attending school even though they have not graduated at a certain level of education
The Independent Variable		
1	The status of the parental unit	1. Complete parents 2. Incomplete parent
The Control Variables		
1	Age group	1. 7–12 years 2. 13–15 years 3. 16–18 years
2	Gender	1. Male 2. Female
3	Receipt of PIP	1. Receiving PIP 2. Not receiving PIP
4	Disability	1. Disability 2. Not disability
5	Household head's education	1. Primary education level (elementary school) 2. Secondary education level (junior high school/high school) 3. Higher education level (college)
6	Main employment of household head	1. Agricultural 2. Non-agricultural
7	Number of household members	Numeric
8	Residential area	1. Urban 2. Rural
9	Percentage of villages with a school	Numeric

This research used a descriptive and inferential analysis method. The descriptive analysis was presented as a cross-tabulation to provide an overview of variables. The inferential analysis was performed via binary logistic regression to determine the effect of complete parents on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years. Before carrying out the logistic regression, independence testing was conducted to conclude the relationship between the independent, categorical control, and dependent variables. A multicollinearity test was also carried out to identify the relationship between the independent and control variables in the regression model.

Results and discussion

Increasing the role of parents in children's education was a priority issue in women's empowerment and child protection (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019c). Table 2 provides an overview of the distribution of the population aged 7–18 years according to their type of parental unit. Of this population, 90.4% lived with both parents, dominated by those in the

youngest age group (7–12 years). This large percentage indicated that most of the population aged 7–18 had complete parental care.

Meanwhile, 9.6% of the population did not have both parents, and female heads of households dominated these single-parent families. The presence of incomplete parental care in the households of school-age children resulted mainly from death or divorce. The presence of an incomplete parental unit will create a dual role for parents in providing both household and childcare needs.

Table 2: Parental Unit of Population Aged 7–18 Years, 2019 (%)

Parents		Age group (years)			Total
		7–12	**13–15**	**16–18**	**7–18**
Both parents		92.6	89.1	86.8	90.4
One parent	Father	1.9	2.8	3.4	2.5
	Mother	5.5	8.1	9.8	7.1

In aggregate, the most frequent education level of household heads (46.7%) was secondary education (junior high school/high school). The second most frequent was household heads with low education (44.2%), while the third was highly educated household heads (9.1%). Meanwhile, the percentage of household heads working in non-agricultural sectors was 57.5%, and based on residence area, most of the population aged 7–18 years live in rural areas.

Before carrying out logistic regression, independence testing was performed through chi-square and multicollinearity tests. The chi-square test results for all categorical independent and categorical control variables showed a statistically significant relationship (p value < .05) between the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years and the status of the parental unit. The multicollinearity test results for all independent and control variables had a VIF (variance inflating factor) value of less than 10, meaning there was no multicollinearity between the independent and control variables.

Table 3: Estimation Results of Binary Logistic Regression Model Parameters for Schooling Sustainability of Population Aged 7–18 Years

Variables	Coefficient	Std. error	Wald's p value	Odds ratio
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Constant	1.711	0.059	.000	5.534
Independent				
Test I				
Parental unit				
0 = one parent		reference category		
1 = both parents	0.231	0.039	.000	1.260
Test II				
Parental unit				
0 = both parents		reference category		
1 = one parent (mother)	-0.234	0.029	.000	0.791
2 = one parent (father)	-0.415	0.046	.000	0.661
Control				
Age group				
0 = 7–12 years		reference category		

Variables	Coefficient	Std. error	Wald's p value	Odds ratio
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1 = 13–15 years	-1.330	0.029	.000	0.323
2 = 16–18 years	-2.950	0.025	.000	0.052
Gender				
0 = female		reference category		
1 = male	-0.375	0.047	.000	0.687
Disability				
0 = non-disability		reference category		
1 = disability	-1.272	0.047	.000	0.280
Receiving PIP				
0 = not receiving PIP		reference category		
1 = receiving PIP	1.881	0.038	.000	6.563
Household head's education				
0 = Primary education level (elementary school)		reference category		
1 = Secondary education level of household head (junior high school/high school)	0.894	0.019	.000	2.444
2 = Higher education level of household head (college)	1.627	0.049	.000	5.086
Main employment of household head				
0 = agricultural		reference category		
1 = non-agricultural	0.301	0.019	.000	1.351
Residential area				
0 = rural		reference category		
1 = urban	0.127	0.021	.000	1.135
Number of household members	-0.053	0.005	.000	0.949
Percentage of villages with a school	2.026	0.045	.000	7.581
Both parents*male population ages 7–18 years	0.088	0.051	.083	1.092

The results of the logistic regression model for the effect of the complete parental unit on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years are presented in Table 2. These results indicated that the variables of parental unit and control variables had p value < .05, so the decision was that at a 95% confidence level, parental status controlled by the variables of sex, receipt of PIP, disability of the child, residence area, education of the household head, the main occupation of the household head, the number of household members, and the percentage of villages that had a school all significantly affected the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years in Indonesia.

In the first test, parental status was divided into two categories, namely both/complete parents and single/incomplete parents. The reference category was incomplete parents (a condition wherein the household has only one of two parents [father or mother]). The status of having both/complete parents were shown to have a positive and significant effect on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years. The coefficient value of both/complete parents was 0.231, which meant that the trend of schooling sustainability for a population aged 7–18 years with both/complete parents was 1.260 times higher than for single/incomplete parents, assuming that other variables were constant.

In the second test, parental status was divided into three categories, namely both/complete parents and single/incomplete parents, either incomplete parents (mother) or incomplete

parents (father). This categorization aimed to look specifically at the effect of the gender of single parents on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years. The reference category was both/complete parents, i.e., father and mother in the household.

The result of the second test showed that the coefficient value of incomplete parents (mother) was negative, and the p value was less than .05, indicating that the status of incomplete parents (mother) was shown to have a negative and significant effect on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years. The trend of schooling sustainability for the children with incomplete parents (mother) was 0.791 times lower than the population aged 7–18 years with both/complete parents, assuming other variables were constant. Meanwhile, the trend of schooling sustainability for the population aged 7–18 years with incomplete parents (father) was 0.661 times lower than for those with both/complete parents, assuming other variables are constant.

The categories of both/complete parents and single/incomplete parents were shown to have different and significant effects on the schooling sustainability of the population aged 7–18 years. Having both parents had a positive effect, while having incomplete parents, either mother or father, had a negative effect on the trend of schooling sustainability. This result aligned with the theory of marriage put forward by Becker (1973), who stated that the parental capital of a complete parental unit was higher than that of single/incomplete parents. Higher parental capital affected the higher production of household commodities, one of which was the educational attainment or schooling sustainability of children. Therefore, families with both parents can better guarantee the sustainability of their children's schooling than families with only one parent.

This result also aligned with the ecological theory put forward by Bronfenbrenner (1977), who stated that the family environment plays a vital role in children's development, especially in educational attainment. The difference in complete and incomplete family structures creates different parenting styles. An incomplete family structure causes one of the parents to be unable to play a role in the sustainability of their children's education. Children with both parents are more likely to receive better financial allocation and educational support than children with single parents.

The results above aligned with the research conducted by Huy (2018), who found that a nuclear family structure (father and mother) positively reduced the dropout rate of children before reaching Grade 12. Pong and Ju (2000), Song et al. (2012), Yi et al. (2015), Abuya et al. (2019), Megawati (2020), Njoku et al. (2020), and Kuno et al. (2021) also revealed that the absence of a father or mother in the household has a negative and significant effect on children's school participation rates. Children living in incomplete parental units tend to choose to work than school (Megawati, 2020). Pong and Ju (2000) revealed that two parents provide better economic resources than just one parent. Meanwhile, only one parent will cause a shortage of social and financial resources (Song et al., 2012). Lack of social and financial resources results in lower chances of continuing schooling for school-age children than for a population with both parents.

Based on Table 3, all control variables significantly affected the probability of schooling sustainability for the population aged 7–18. Control variables in the 13–15 and 16–18 age groups were shown to have negative effects (Kuno et al., 2021), male gender had a negative effect (Kuno et al., 2021; Megawati, 2020), having disabilities had a negative effect (Kuno et al., 2021; Mizunoya et al., 2018), acceptance of PIP has a positive effect (Setyadharma, 2018; Susilo & Wahyudi, 2020; Uriyalita et al., 2020), secondary and higher level of household head's

education had a positive effect (Ampristi & Setiadi, 2019; Agustina, 2021; Kameyama, 2021), the primary employment of the household head being in a non-agricultural sector had a positive effect (Ampristi & Setiadi, 2019; Farah & Upadhyay, 2017), increasing number of household members had a negative effect (Abuya et al, 2019; Huy, 2018), urban area had a positive effect (Hakim, 2020; Hidayatina & Garces-Ozanne, 2019), and increasing the percentage of villages that have schools had a positive effect on the probability of schooling sustainability (Hidayatina & Garces-Ozanne, 2019; Yahia et al, 2018).

Conclusion

The SUSENAS 2019 data showed that 90.4% of the school-age population (7–18 years) lives with both parents and is dominated by people in the youngest age group (7–12 years). The other 9.6% do not have both parents (incomplete parents), and female heads of households dominate this group. The presence of single parents in households of 7–18-year-olds is primarily due to death or divorce. The most frequent highest education level of the household head is secondary education (junior high/high school), and most work in non-agricultural jobs (57.5%) and live in rural areas (61.6%).

The results of the inferential analysis show that parental status (both/complete parents and single/incomplete parents) significantly affects the probability of schooling sustainability for the population aged 7–18 years. Having both parents have a positive and significant effect, while having single parents has a negative and significant effect on the probability of schooling sustainability. All control variables used in this study significantly affect the likelihood of schooling sustainability for the population aged 7–18.

The presence of both parents is one component of family resilience. Strong family resilience must be encouraged to achieve sustainability in the school-age population's schooling. These efforts can be made through more intense and comprehensive socialization and outreach on issues relating to family resilience for the whole family. This can be achieved by developing activities that can strengthen the roles of both parents in supporting the sustainability of their children's schooling, either through financial or social support. The government can provide special scholarships for children with poor single parents to achieve better educational outcomes. Moreover, the government can also distribute subsidies to single-parent households to strengthen the resources available for their children's education, thus protecting their children from being vulnerable to dropping out of school.

Acknowledgments

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