

An Indonesian Perspective of Father's Involvement in Children's Education: The Role of Religiosity, Marital Satisfaction, and Father's Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

In Indonesia, traditional social norms continue to emphasize the father as the dominant and authoritative figure in family life. However, research on fathers' involvement in children's education and the factors influencing it remains limited. This study investigates the alignment between a theoretical model of father involvement and empirical data, specifically examining the impact of religiosity, marital satisfaction, and fathers' self-efficacy on their participation in children's education. The study surveyed 393 fathers of state junior high school students in Malang, Indonesia, using four standardized instruments: the Father's Involvement Scale, Religiosity Scale, Marital Satisfaction Scale, and Father's Self-Efficacy Scale. Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis confirmed a strong fit between the theoretical framework and empirical findings. Results indicate that religiosity has a direct influence on father involvement and marital satisfaction but does not significantly affect involvement indirectly through marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction, in turn, has a significant impact on both father involvement and self-efficacy, while self-efficacy directly contributes to greater involvement in children's education. Based on these findings, schools are encouraged to actively engage fathers in educational activities to enhance their role in adolescent education. Given the study's quantitative approach, future research should consider a mixed-methods design to provide a more comprehensive understanding of father involvement in adolescent education.

Keywords: *children's education, father involvement, father self-efficacy, marital satisfaction, religiosity.*

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Introduction

Data from the Central Statistics Agency of Malang City, Indonesia (2020), indicates that 76.01% of children aged 15 have completed elementary and middle school. One of the key factors contributing to low educational attainment is parents' lack of awareness regarding the importance of their children's education. A survey conducted by Kompas (2015) among 326 respondents aged 17 and older across 12 cities examined parental engagement with schools. The results showed that 40.2% of parents visited their child's school only at the end of each semester, 16.9% attended monthly, 16.6% visited weekly, 15% visited daily, 4% came only at the end of the school year, 4.9% never visited, and 2.4% were unsure. This data suggests that many parents are not actively involved in their children's education and have limited communication with schools regarding their children's academic progress and development.

Research has consistently demonstrated the positive impact of father involvement on children's academic performance. A meta-analysis by Lazović et al. (2022) confirmed the significant benefits of paternal engagement in education. Longitudinal research by Cano, Perales, and Baxter (2019) also highlights the strong influence of father involvement on children's cognitive development and educational outcomes. Flouri and Buchanan (2004) found that fathers who were actively involved in their child's education at age seven were more likely to have children with high academic achievement by age 20. Additionally, father involvement has been shown to foster children's talents in mathematics and science (Cho & Campbell, 2011) and enhance academic self-concept and achievement (Newland et al., 2013). Conversely, the absence of a father has been associated with lower academic performance and poor psychosocial adjustment in school (Martin et al., 2010).

While the benefits of father involvement are well-documented, research on the motivations behind paternal engagement in parenting remains limited (Baker, 2014). Moreover, studies on father involvement have predominantly focused on middle-class white populations (Cabrera et al., 1999). Given that Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, understanding fatherhood within this cultural and religious context is essential. According to Ashur (2006), Islam views marriage as the foundation for procreation, and parents have a religious duty to provide both worldly and spiritual education to their children (Effendi, 2006). However, research on father involvement in Indonesia's Muslim communities is still scarce.

Indonesia's patriarchal culture also shapes parental roles. While fathers can contribute to childcare, mothers remain the primary caregivers (Seward & Stanley-Stevens, 2014). This differs from many Asian cultures, where fathers are often perceived as hardworking yet emotionally distant figures. In Indonesia, father involvement is significantly influenced by traditional gender roles (Novianti, Suarman, & Islami, 2023). Given these cultural norms, further research is needed to explore the impact of limited father-child relationships within patriarchal societies.

Although the role of mothers in child-rearing has been extensively studied (Dean, Churchill, & Ruppner, 2022), fathers also play a crucial role in their children's development. Traditionally, mothers are seen as natural caregivers, while fathers are viewed as economic providers (Karre, 2015). However, societal shifts, including the increasing number of women in the workforce, have begun to challenge these gendered expectations (Juhari et al., 2013; McHale et al., 2015). As Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda (2004) emphasize, it is essential to encourage fathers to take a more active role in childcare. Research suggests that fathers significantly influence their children's growth and development, often in ways distinct from mothers (Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020; Lamb, 2010). Amodia-Bidakowska et al. (2020) further highlight the unique role fathers play in shaping adolescent character development (Hanurawan, Chusniyah, & Rahmawati, 2020; Lestari et al., 2015). Cano et al. (2019) assert that fathers interact with their children not only as playmates but also as role models, reinforcing their crucial role in child development.

Research has extensively documented the positive effects of father involvement in child development (Deneault et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2020; Farida, Bakhtiae, & Chusniyah, 2022). These benefits extend throughout childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood (Allen & Daly, 2007). Father involvement has been linked to improvements in children's social (Veronica, 2013), cognitive, and emotional development. It enhances language skills, fosters an interest in literacy, increases empathy, and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety. Additionally, it positively impacts academic performance (Lipscomb, 2011), promotes life skills (Machmudah et al., 2020), and plays a crucial role

in achieving academic success (Diniz et al., 2021; Veronica, 2013). Furthermore, fathers contribute significantly to preventing alcohol-related behaviors in adolescents (Goncy & van Dulmen, 2010) and reducing problematic behaviors in children (Flouri, 2016; Yoon et al., 2017).

Beyond child development, father involvement also benefits the psychological well-being of both fathers and mothers. Conversely, the absence of a father has been associated with poor academic performance and difficulties in psychosocial adjustment at school (Martin et al., 2010). Children without active paternal involvement are at a higher risk of developing psychopathological symptoms, including depression, antisocial traits, and behavioral disorders (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Le Roux, 2009; Trautman-Villalba et al., 2006). A poor father-child relationship can also negatively affect a child's overall well-being and assimilation (Park, Park, & Kim, 2023). Research in Hong Kong further indicates that weak paternal bonds are linked to lower self-esteem in children (Kwok et al., 2012).

Father involvement is generally defined as the degree of a father's participation in childrearing (Pleck, 2010). Despite the increasing body of empirical research, Palkovitz (2019) notes the absence of a universally accepted model of father involvement. Bossardi et al. (2018) highlight the diversity of paternal involvement models, which are reflected in various definitions, measurement instruments, and approaches to studying the phenomenon. Several theoretical frameworks (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2014; Parke, 2000) distinguish between different forms of engagement. These include **direct care**, which involves direct interaction with the child (e.g., bathing), and **indirect care**, which encompasses managerial responsibilities that do not require direct interaction (e.g., packing a diaper bag). Studies indicate that mothers typically engage more in both direct and indirect care compared to fathers (Cabrera et al., 2000; Lamb & Lewis, 2010; Monteiro et al., 2018; Torres et al., 2014). A study in Chile found that only one-third of participating fathers reported being responsible for direct care tasks (Aguayo et al., 2016).

The ecological model of father-child relationships (Cabrera et al., 2014) suggests that paternal involvement develops through reciprocal interactions with various factors. These include (1) father-related characteristics (e.g., biological and cultural influences, personality, rearing history), (2) family-related characteristics (e.g., child's sex, mother's work status, marital relationships), and (3) broader contextual, cultural, political, and economic influences (e.g., social support, family socioeconomic status) (Taraban & Shaw, 2018; Jessee & Adamsons, 2018).

Research indicates that child-related factors, such as sex and age, influence paternal involvement. Fathers tend to be more engaged with boys and older children (Braungart-Rieker & Planalp, 2016; Kulik & Sadeh, 2015; Torres et al., 2014). Additionally, mother-related factors, such as employment status and the number of working hours, show a positive association with paternal involvement (Maroto-Navarro et al., 2013).

Building on this framework, the present study applies the ecological model of father involvement (Belsky, 1984; Cabrera et al., 2014) while incorporating Feinberg's (2002) expansion, which introduces a mediating factor. Using a student sample, this study examines how multiple ecological levels directly and indirectly impact paternal involvement (Kwok & Li, 2015). Specifically, it explores the influence of father-related psychological factors—such as religiosity, marital satisfaction, and self-efficacy—on paternal engagement in childcare, either directly or through mediating effects.

Religiosity and Father's Involvement

A father's individual characteristics, such as religiosity, play a crucial role in shaping his involvement in childcare and parenting (Shafer et al., 2019; Coates & Phares, 2014). The degree of religiosity may help explain variations in father involvement (Juhari et al., 2023). However, there is a need for a deeper understanding of how religiosity, social norms, and parenting beliefs influence the fatherhood process (Cabrera et al., 2018; Parke & Cookston, 2019). Father involvement occurs within diverse family ecosystems and is shaped by personal values and beliefs (Cabrera et al., 2018; Lamb, 2004).

Religion has been identified as an important factor in father involvement, yet it has received relatively little empirical attention (Lynn et al., 2016). Studies suggest a positive correlation between a father's religiosity and his engagement in child-rearing (Goodman & Dyer, 2020). Similarly, research by Ahmadi and Hosseini-Abadi (2009) and King (2003) found that fathers with strong religious commitments tend to exercise greater supervision and control over their children. Kapinus and Pellerin (2008) further suggest that a father's current religious practices can shape his perception of the parent-child relationship. In general, higher religiosity in fathers is associated with greater involvement in child-rearing, whereas lower religiosity correlates with reduced paternal engagement (Petro et al., 2018; Wilcox, 2002).

Religiosity also influences marital relationships, which in turn affect father involvement. Research indicates that religiously observant couples report higher marital satisfaction (Brown et al., 2008; Aman et al., 2019). Religion emphasizes the importance of marriage, and couples who integrate religious beliefs into their relationship tend to experience stronger marital bonds, which further supports father involvement (McLeod & Tirmazi, 2017). Religious individuals often report greater marital satisfaction (Mahoney et al., 2001) and exhibit more warmth and affection toward their children (Wilcox, 1998). Since religion is woven into daily family interactions—including marriage, parent-child relationships, and the overall family dynamic—it fosters more frequent and positive connections among family members (Lynn et al., 2016).

Marital satisfaction and Father's Involvement

In patriarchal cultural contexts, the concept of fathers actively raising children is often foreign and requires substantial support, appreciation, and recognition from their partners (Kwok & Li, 2015). Consequently, the relationship between a father and mother plays a crucial role in determining paternal involvement. Family stability and harmony are largely centered on the quality of this relationship.

Research has shown that co-parenting or parenting alliances—where both parents collaborate as a cohesive unit—positively influence father involvement (Cole et al., 2021; Jeynes, 2016; McClain & Demaris, 2013). Furthermore, the quality and satisfaction of the mother-father relationship are strong predictors of paternal involvement (McLeod & Tirmazi, 2017; Lynn et al., 2016; Baker, 2014; Varga et al., 2017; Paulson, 2011). However, some studies suggest that relationship satisfaction does not significantly impact a father's level of involvement (Trahan, 2017; Shannon et al., 2005).

Conversely, conflicts between partners have been found to negatively affect paternal engagement (Planalp & Braungart-Rieker, 2016; Sano et al., 2011). Lamb (2010) highlights that marital satisfaction influences fathers' participation in childcare, with several studies indicating that higher levels of marital satisfaction correlate with greater paternal involvement (Kwok et al., 2012; Tremblay & Pierce, 2011; Leidy et al., 2009; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2010).

Father self-efficacy and Father's Involvement

A father's individual factors, such as his sense of self-efficacy, play a crucial role in determining his level of involvement in his child's education (Doherty et al., 1988). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform a behavior (Bandura, 1997; Coleman & Karraker, 2003). Research by Wells, Kerstis, and Andersson (2021) highlights that a father's skills and confidence in his parenting role significantly influence his involvement in both the care and education of his children.

Father involvement is closely linked to a father's confidence in his ability to be an empathetic parent and a positive role model. When fathers embrace their parenting responsibilities, their self-efficacy tends to increase. A high level of self-efficacy enables fathers to effectively fulfill their parenting tasks, enhances their satisfaction with their parental role, and strengthens their emotional bonds with their children (Lamb, 2010; Newland et al., 2013; Kwok et al., 2012; Steca et al., 2011, 2012; Biehle & Mickelson, 2011; Tremblay & Pierce, 2011). Additionally, a father's sense of competence and self-efficacy are strong predictors of his level of involvement in parenting (Cole et al., 2021; Pagorek-Eshel & Dekel, 2015; Kwok & Li, 2015; Freeman et al., 2008). Fathers with higher self-efficacy feel more in control of their parenting behaviors (Trahan, 2017) and are better equipped to adapt to parenting challenges (Jones & Prinz, 2005; Wittkowski et al., 2017). Consequently, fathers with greater parenting self-efficacy tend to be more actively involved in raising their children.

Although extensive research has explored father involvement in children's education, there is a lack of studies examining the interplay between religiosity, marital satisfaction, and fathers' self-efficacy, particularly in the Indonesian context. Indonesia is a nation with strong religious traditions and deeply rooted family values, which may significantly shape father involvement in children's education. Understanding how these cultural factors influence parenting is essential. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this research gap by investigating the relationship between religiosity, marital satisfaction, self-efficacy, and father involvement. The findings will contribute to the field of educational psychology, particularly within the Indonesian cultural framework.

This study examines four key latent variables: father involvement, self-efficacy, marital satisfaction, and religiosity. The research hypotheses are as follows:

Major Hypothesis

There is a fit between the theoretical model of father involvement and the empirical data collected.

Minor Hypotheses

H1: Religiosity influences father involvement.

H2: Religiosity influences marital satisfaction.

H3: Marital satisfaction influences father involvement.

H4: Marital satisfaction influences father's self-efficacy.

H5: Father's self-efficacy influences father involvement.

H6: Religiosity influences father involvement indirectly through marital satisfaction.

H7: Marital satisfaction influences father involvement indirectly through self-efficacy.

By testing these hypotheses, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the factors shaping father involvement in children's education within the Indonesian cultural context.

Method

Design

This study employs a quantitative, non-experimental field research design, conducted in a natural setting (Gall et al., 2003). Following Tuckman's (1999) classification, it is categorized as an ex post facto study with a causal relationship design. The primary objective is to examine the influence of religiosity, marital satisfaction, and fathers' self-efficacy on their level of involvement.

Participant

This study employed a cluster random sampling method. First, clusters were defined as state middle schools, and a random selection of schools was made. Within each selected school, fathers of students were then randomly chosen as participants. The sample was drawn from three designated sub-districts in Malang City, Indonesia, ensuring that all eligible subjects had an equal opportunity to participate. A total of 393 fathers of state junior high school students were included in the study. The selection criteria required participants to be (a) fathers of students in grades 7, 8, or 9 and (b) fathers who lived in the same household as the student's mother.

Measurement

Four instruments were employed in this study: the Father Involvement Scale, Religiosity Scale, Marital Satisfaction Scale, and Father's Self-Efficacy Scale. The content validity of each instrument was evaluated using Brislin's back-translation model (Brislin, 1986), a widely recognized method in cross-cultural research (Cha et al., 2007; John et al., 2006; Tyupa, 2013). Construct validity was then assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Data were collected by distributing questionnaires directly to the research participants.

Father Involvement

The Father Involvement Scale is an adaptation of the Inventory of Father Involvement (Hawkins et al., 2002). Based on the CFA results, 18 items were retained as valid indicators of father involvement, with all factor loadings exceeding 0.40. The scale's reliability was confirmed by a composite reliability of 0.958 (above the 0.70 threshold) and an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.720 (exceeding the 0.50 criterion). Sample items include "disciplining your children," "accepting the responsibility to provide financial support for your children," and "being a friend or buddy to your children."

Religiosity

The Religiosity Scale was adapted from the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (Underwood, 2006). CFA results identified 9 valid items for measuring religiosity, with all loadings above 0.40. The reliability of this scale is supported by a composite reliability of 0.931 and an AVE of 0.611. Example items include "I feel the presence of God," "I experience a connection with all realms of life," and "I feel a deep sense of inner peace or harmony."

Marital Satisfaction

Adapted from the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby et al., 1995; Isanezhad et al., 2012), the Marital Satisfaction Scale consists of 9 items validated by CFA (all factor loadings >0.40). Although the composite reliability is 0.642—slightly below the conventional threshold of 0.70—Hair et al. (2014) suggest that values between 0.60 and 0.70 can be acceptable when indicators are valid. The AVE is 0.375, which is lower than the recommended 0.50; however, the acceptable factor loadings support the scale's validity. Sample items include "showing affection," "making big decisions," and "frequency of interactions with your partner."

Father's Self-Efficacy

The Father's Self-Efficacy Scale is adapted from Fathering Self-Efficacy (Sevigny et al., 2016). CFA confirmed 10 valid items for this construct, with all loadings above 0.40. The scale exhibits excellent reliability, with a composite reliability of 0.972 and an AVE of 0.919. Example items include “I can spend time with my child,” “I know how to encourage my child's interest in the environment,” and “I am a role model for my child.”

Data Analysis

To test the influence of self-efficacy, marital satisfaction, and religiosity on father involvement, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. This analysis examined the structural relationships between the latent variables to provide a comprehensive understanding of the proposed model.

Result

The research hypothesis posits that the theoretical model of father involvement in children's education aligns with the empirical findings from field research. In other words, a good fit of the model indicates that the field data support this hypothesis. The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, which test this primary hypothesis, are presented in Figure I and Table I.

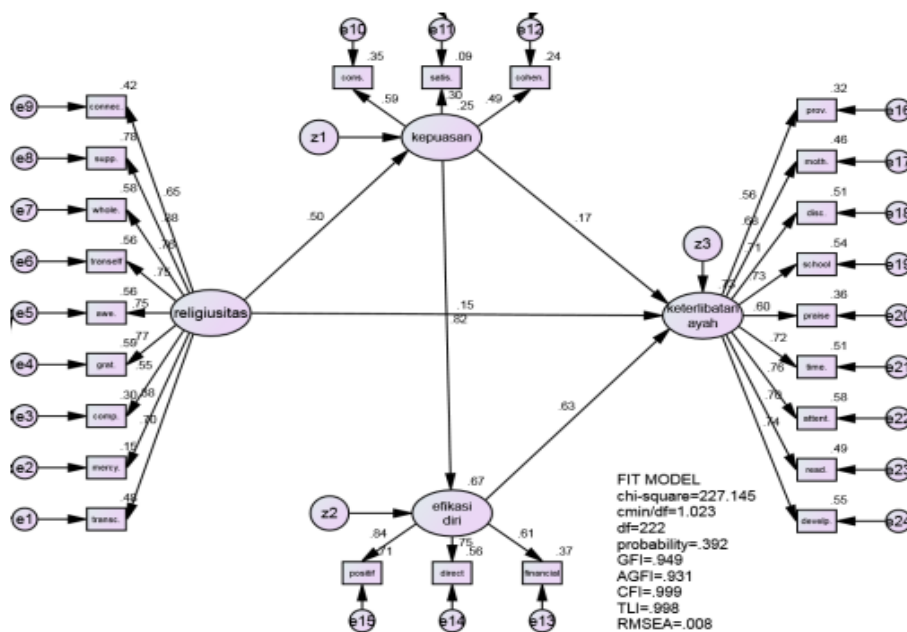


Figure I. Struktural Model of Father's Involvement

Figure I shows that the structural model of father involvement meets the necessary requirements. Additionally, the accompanying table presents the model's goodness-of-fit results.

Table 1

Structural Model Suitability Index Criteria

Criteria	Result Test		Cut Off	Description
	Model	Indication		
Chi-square	227.145	Kecil	Kecil	Baik
Cmin/df	1.023	< 2.00	< 2.00	Baik
Probability	0.392	> 0.05	> 0.05	Baik
GFI	0.949	> 0.90	> 0.90	Baik
AGFI	0.931	> 0.90	> 0.90	Baik
CFI	0.999	> 0.95	> 0.95	Baik
TLI	0.998	> 0.95	> 0.95	Baik
RMSEA	0.008	< 0.08	< 0.08	Baik

According to the structural analysis results shown in Table 1, all goodness-of-fit criteria meet the required standards. Overall, the proposed model of father involvement aligns well with the empirical data, demonstrating its robustness. Additionally, Table 2 presents the coefficients of determination for both exogenous and endogenous variables.

Table 2

Exogenous Variable Determination Coefficient on Endogenous Variables

Exogenous Variable	Endogenous Variable	Determination Coefficient	Effective Influence
Religiousness Marriage Satisfaction self-efficacy	Father's Involvement	0.73	73%
Marriage Satisfaction	Self-efficacy	0.67	67%
Religiosity	Marriage Satisfaction	0.25	25%

Table 2 presents the coefficients of determination, which indicate the extent to which the exogenous variables explain the variations in the endogenous variables. For example, father involvement shows a coefficient of 0.73, meaning that religiosity, self-efficacy, and marital satisfaction together account for 73% of its variance, while 27% is influenced by factors outside the model. Similarly, self-efficacy has a coefficient of 0.67, indicating that marital satisfaction explains 67% of its variance, with the remaining 33% due to other variables not included in the study. In contrast, marital satisfaction exhibits a coefficient of 0.25, suggesting that religiosity accounts for only 25% of its variance, with the remaining 75% influenced by additional, unmodeled factors.

Minor Hypothesis Test Outcome

A minor hypothesis establishes a relationship between two variables. In our research model, each minor hypothesis is tested by calculating the significance value for every path. We then assess the influence of each construct by comparing its direct, indirect, and total effects on the variables.

Table 3
Direct Effect Test Results

Relations		Estimate (Regression weight)	Estimate (Standardized regression weight)	S.E	C.R	p
Independent	Dependent					
Religiosity	Father's involvement	.095	.153	.036	2.664	.008
Marriage satisfaction	Father's involvement	.217	.175	.209	1.038	.299
Self-efficacy	Father's Involvement	.523	.626	.122	4.300	.000
Religiosity	Marriage satisfaction	.253	.505	.042	6.033	.000
Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy	1.214	.817	.179	6.788	.000

All estimated standardized regression weights are positive, indicating that an increase in the independent variable corresponds with an increase in the dependent variable. Table 3 presents the hypothesis testing for direct effects based on significance values (p-values):

H1: The Influence of Religiosity on Father Involvement

The standardized regression weight is 0.153, with a significance level of $p = 0.008 (< 0.05)$. These results indicate that religiosity has a positive and significant effect on father involvement.

H2: The Influence of Religiosity on Marital Satisfaction

Here, the standardized regression weight is 0.505, with a significance level of $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$, demonstrating that religiosity positively and significantly impacts marital satisfaction.

H3: The Influence of Marital Satisfaction on Father Involvement

The analysis shows a standardized regression weight of 0.175 and a significance level of $p = 0.299 (> 0.05)$. This suggests that marital satisfaction does not have a significant effect on father involvement.

H4: The Influence of Marital Satisfaction on Self-Efficacy

The results indicate a standardized regression weight of 0.817, with a significance level of $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$. Therefore, marital satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on self-efficacy.

H5: The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Father Involvement

The standardized regression weight is 0.626, with a significance level of $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$, indicating that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on father involvement.

Indirect Effects

Additionally, AMOS was used to calculate the standardized indirect effects, confirming the presence of an indirect effect in this study. See table 4 below.

Table 4
Indirect Effect Test Results

Independent	Interfering relationship	Dependent	Standardized Indirect effect	P
Religiosity	Marriage Satisfaction	Father's involvement	0.346	0.404
Marriage Satisfaction	Self-efficacy	Father's involvement	0.511	0.000

H6: Influence of Religiosity on Father Involvement Mediated by Marital Satisfaction

The analysis yielded a standardized indirect effect of 0.346 with a p-value of 0.404 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that religiosity does not have a significant indirect effect on father involvement via marital satisfaction; in other words, marital satisfaction does not mediate this relationship.

H7: Influence of Marital Satisfaction on Father Involvement Mediated by Self-Efficacy

In contrast, the standardized indirect effect of marital satisfaction on father involvement, mediated by self-efficacy, is 0.511 with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This statistically significant result confirms that self-efficacy acts as a mediator in the relationship between marital satisfaction and father involvement.

Total Effect Test Outcomes

Table 5 presents the total effect test results, which include the direct effects (standardized regression weights shown in Table 3), the indirect effects (shown in Table 4), and the overall standardized total effect.

Table 5
Indirect Effect Test Results

Variable relationship	Direct influence	Indirect influence	Total influence	Standardized total effect
Religiosity → Father's involvement	.153	.346	.153 + .346 = .499	.499
Marriage Satisfaction → Father's involvement	.175	.511	.175 + .511 = .686	.686
self-efficacy → Father's involvement	.626	-	.626	.626
Religiosity → Marriage Satisfaction	.505	-	.505	.505
Marriage Satisfaction → self-efficacy	0.817	-	0.817	0.817
Religiosity → self-efficacy	-	0.412	0.412	0.412

Table 5 presents the total influence values for the variables. Religiosity has a total influence of 0.499 on father involvement. In comparison, marital satisfaction and self-efficacy exert total influences of 0.686 and 0.626 on father involvement, respectively. Additionally, religiosity influences marital satisfaction with a total effect of 0.505. Regarding self-efficacy, marital satisfaction has a strong total influence of 0.817, while religiosity contributes a total influence of 0.412.

Discussion

The structural model analysis confirms that the theoretical model of father involvement is well supported by the empirical data, and the main hypothesis has been accepted. Specifically, father involvement is directly influenced by religiosity and self-efficacy, while marital satisfaction does not have a direct effect. Instead, marital satisfaction contributes indirectly to father involvement by enhancing self-efficacy. Moreover, the findings reveal that greater religiosity leads to higher marital satisfaction, which in turn increases fathers' self-efficacy.

The study's most significant and novel contribution is its model illustrating how religiosity affects father involvement both directly and indirectly—through marital satisfaction and self-efficacy. In essence, a father's religiosity not only promotes his direct involvement in his children's education and care but also enhances marital satisfaction, thereby boosting self-efficacy and further increasing his engagement.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (Pleck, 2007) provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. The theory describes four ecological levels—microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, and macrosystem—and highlights the microsystem as the primary context where direct interactions occur. In the context of father involvement, the microsystem, which includes children, wives, parents, and friends, plays a crucial role. Here, factors such as religiosity, self-efficacy, and marital satisfaction significantly influence the extent of a father's involvement in his children's education and care.

Fathers' active participation in their children's education and care plays a crucial role in their overall development. At the microsystem level, fathers introduce children to their immediate environment, fostering a strong sense of togetherness and bonding. Beyond the family, fathers engage in the mesosystem by interacting with neighbors, schools, and local communities—including building relationships with teachers. They also extend their network to broader community members, such as local government bodies and professional organizations, operating within the ecosystem and even participating in national, regional, and international agendas at the macrosystem level. Overall, factors like religiosity, self-efficacy, and marital satisfaction influence the degree of father involvement. Although engaging in activities outside the family may involve children in broader experiences, it can sometimes reduce direct childcare involvement. A father's ability to manage both family and external responsibilities is key to increasing his involvement.

The study's findings reveal that marital satisfaction does not directly influence father involvement but exerts an indirect effect through self-efficacy. Positive interactions between fathers and mothers enhance marital satisfaction, which in turn boosts fathers' confidence in their parenting abilities. Fathers with high self-efficacy are more likely to actively engage in their children's lives—a finding consistent with previous research showing that satisfied fathers tend to be happier and more confident in their roles (Kwok et al. 2012).

Additionally, the study found that religiosity has a positive and statistically significant impact on father involvement. As a component of the macrosystem, religious values that extend to all aspects of life, including education, encourage fathers to fulfill their roles more effectively. This aligns with earlier studies indicating that higher levels of religiosity are strongly associated with increased parental engagement in their children's education (Petro et al., 2018; Wilcox, 2002).

The findings indicate that religiosity significantly enhances a father's involvement in his children's education. Consistent with studies by Shafer et al. (2019), Lynn et al. (2016), and Coates and Phares (2014), higher levels of religious engagement are linked to more active paternal behaviors. Research by Petro et al. (2018) and Wilcox (2002) further supports that religiosity shapes fathers' commitment to their children, while Pett (2018) reports that fathers who frequently engage in religious activities tend to be more involved. In contrast, Ahmadi and Hosseini (2009) found that low religiosity is associated with reduced paternal involvement.

Religious commitment also appears to influence parental supervision and marital satisfaction. Parents who are strongly committed to their faith tend to monitor and guide their children more closely (Ahmadi & Hosseini, 2009; Brown et al., 2008). Moreover, religiosity serves as a foundation for upholding marital commitments and nurturing family life, encompassing both observable practices like attending services and more internalized behaviors (Ancok & Suroso, 2018). Consistent with these insights, our results demonstrate that religiosity positively impacts marital satisfaction. This finding aligns with Hurlock's (2018) assertion on the role of religiosity in enhancing marital dynamics, as well as with research by Aman et al. (2019), which shows that more religious couples enjoy happier and more stable marriages, and by Ahmadi and Hosseini-Abadi (2009) and Brown et al. (2008), who found that fulfilling religious obligations is associated with higher marital satisfaction.

According to Aman et al. (2019), marital satisfaction and closeness are significantly influenced by a couple's level of religiosity and commitment to the sanctity of marriage—viewing their union as bound by sacred promises before God. In line with this, Hawari (2019) found that families lacking strong religious commitment face a fourfold increase in the risk of unhappiness, including divorce and disloyalty. Given that divorce is generally viewed negatively (Austin et al., 2018), religious couples tend to oppose it and are willing to endure difficult conditions that might affect marital satisfaction (Watkins & Kolts, 2003).

In contrast, the study's results indicate no significant relationship between marital satisfaction and father involvement. This finding diverges from research by Kwok et al. (2012), Lamb (2010), Lynn et al. (2016), Baker (2014), Varga et al. (2017), and Paulson (2011), which suggests that higher marital satisfaction can enhance fathers' self-efficacy and encourage greater involvement in childcare. However, it aligns with the work of Trahan (2017) and Shannon et al. (2005), who reported that the quality of the marital relationship does not directly affect father involvement. Moreover, McLeod and Tirmazi's (2017) research on black fathers with criminal records found that stronger marital bonds sometimes correspond with lower levels of father involvement in child-related activities. Although the fathers in this study reported both high marital satisfaction and active engagement with their children, marital satisfaction did not exert a direct influence on father involvement. Trahan explains that internal factors—such as a father's self-efficacy and expectations—play a more crucial role than external elements like the marital or co-parenting relationship.

The results indicate a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and fathers' self-efficacy. In other words, fathers who report higher marital satisfaction tend to be more confident in their ability to care for their children, which aligns with previous findings (Kwok et al., 2012). Moreover, a positive family environment fostered by marital satisfaction may encourage father involvement in parenting even when self-efficacy levels are relatively low (Leidy et al., 2009).

Our study further reveals that self-efficacy positively and significantly influences fathers' involvement in childcare and education. This supports earlier research by Lamb (2010) and Holmes and Huston (2010), demonstrating that self-confident fathers are generally more active and engaged in their children's lives, better equipped to meet parenting responsibilities, and more prepared to overcome associated challenges.

Additionally, self-efficacy emerges as a key motivator for father involvement in childcare (Sanderson & Thompson, 2002; Tremblay & Pierce, 2011; Biehle & Mickelson, 2011; Steca et al., 2011). Jang et al. (2017) further explain that parents with high self-efficacy perceive their parenting responsibilities as positive challenges—opportunities to understand issues fully, devise effective strategies, and take concrete steps in caring for and educating their children.

Research indicates that religiosity does not influence father involvement through marital satisfaction. In other words, marital satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between religiosity and father involvement. This finding aligns with King's (2003) study on both divorced and married fathers, which showed that highly religious fathers remain involved in their children's education regardless of their marital status.

Path analysis further confirmed that there is no significant relationship between marital satisfaction and father involvement. Although the fathers in the study reported high levels of both involvement and marital satisfaction, marital satisfaction itself did not have a direct impact on their level of involvement. Instead, factors such as religiosity and self-efficacy were found to have a stronger influence on father involvement.

These results contradict earlier research that identified marital satisfaction as a contributing factor to father involvement. For instance, Kwok et al. (2012) found that marital satisfaction can boost fathers' self-efficacy, encouraging them to participate more actively in childcare. Similarly, Olson and Fowers (1989) reported that shared leisure activities can strengthen the marital bond by increasing closeness between spouses, even amidst busy schedules.

This study is limited by its reliance solely on data from fathers of public junior high school students in Malang city. Future research should incorporate data from students and mothers to create a more comprehensive analysis. In addition, expanding the sample to include representatives from cities across Indonesia could help establish a national model for father involvement in adolescent education. Furthermore, as this study employed only quantitative methods, future research should consider a mixed-methods approach—combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques—to gain a deeper understanding of father involvement. The measurement tools used here can also be applied to similar or related studies.

The study's implications suggest that schools should routinely organize seminars and training sessions to enhance fathers' knowledge and skills regarding their involvement in adolescent education. Schools

are encouraged to actively involve fathers in school activities; if only mothers have been engaged so far, it is important to start including fathers to optimize their contribution. For example, schools could organize one-day events where fathers volunteer as guest teachers in sessions that leverage their expertise, as well as create collaborative projects that involve both fathers and their children.

Conclusion

Our study found that three major factors influence fathers' involvement in their children's education: religiosity, marital satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Religiosity directly enhances father involvement by reinforcing a father's commitment to his children and by helping resolve marital issues, thereby boosting marital satisfaction. However, religiosity does not indirectly influence father involvement through marital satisfaction. Instead, marital satisfaction appears to work through self-efficacy. A harmonious marital relationship can bolster a father's self-efficacy, motivating him to become more engaged in his parental role—even if he initially lacks confidence. In turn, higher self-efficacy leads to more active involvement in both the care and education of children. Future research should expand the sample size and employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to further explore these relationships.

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Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data Availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

Declarations Ethical Statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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