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Optimizing Left-behind Children's Well-being of Migrant Worker's Families in Rural Areas through Strengthening the Nuclear Family System: A Perspective from Child's View

Optimalisasi Kesejahteraan Left-behind Children pada Keluarga Pekerja Migran di Pedesaan melalui Penguatan Sistem Keluarga Inti: Sebuah Perspektif dari Sisi Anak

Alfiasari[1,*], Titik Sumarti[2], Ekawati Sri Wahyuni[3], Irni Rahmayani Johan[4]

[1,4] Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, IPB University, Bogor 16680, Indonesia
[2,3]Department of Communication and Community Development Science, IPB University, Bogor 16680, Indonesia
[*)]Correspondence e-mail: alfiasari@apps.ipb.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Children who are left by their parents who work outside the region or abroad as migrant workers will face various well-being problems. This requires a further study to explore the well-being of left-behind children of migrant workers' families in Indonesia, both circular migrant workers and international migrant workers. This study aimed to analyze left-behind children's subjective well-being condition and its relation to family-based social capital and social support that children of migrant worker families perceive. This study is expected to be an initial finding to direct further studies related to strengthening the nuclear family system for families of migrant workers who can optimize the left-behind children's well-being of families of migrant workers. This research was conducted in Juntinyuat, Limbangan, and Dadap Villages, Juntinyuat District, Indramayu Regency. The sampling technique used snowball sampling with samples of children aged 12-18 years from families of migrant workers, both circular and international. The total respondents were 120 children whose data were collected through a self-administered method. The study found that left-behind children whose mothers worked as international migrant workers were more vulnerable to their well-being than other left-behind children. The role of family-based social capital and social support as components in strengthening the nuclear family system of migrant worker families is discussed further in this article.

Keywords: children, children's subjective well-being, migrant families, social capital, social support

INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers' families characterized by a father or a mother or both leaving the family and their children in the origin village (known as left-behind children) will have many problems. These risk factors require further study related to the condition of left-behind children, both in national and international groups of migrant workers. Data published by the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BP2MI, 2020) noted that the number of international migrant workers from Indonesia or usually known as Indonesian Migrant Workers (Pekerja Migran Indonesia/PMI) in 2020, was 113,173 people. The largest proportion (79.97 percent) was women migrant workers (Pekerja Migran Perempuan/PMP), and the types of work (49, 83 percent) were domestic workers. Meanwhile, based on the Population and Labor Mobility Statistics of the Year 2019 (BPS, 2019), it was noted that nationally there was 6.52 percent of the working population whose status was commuter workers, and 2.24 percent were circular workers. These two types of workers carry out routine mobility from home to work but differ in time. Commuter workers carry out mobility back and forth within one day, while circular workers every week or every month (less than six months). The workers who migrate, especially PMI and circular migrant workers, will leave their families in the origin villages in a not-short period of time and, of course, will affect the lives of the left-behind families, including the children. Jayasuriya (2021) reveals that migration for work, especially abroad, which occurs at a productive age as well as a critical age in parent-child relationships, is a global problem that has the potential to threaten the protection of parent-child relationships.

Remittance is one of the advantages of the migrant worker phenomenon. On the other hand, the parents' migration causes the need for a substitute care role for the left-behind child (Démurger, 2015). The impact of Indonesian migration on family structure and function has not been widely studied (Wahyuni, 2005). In cases where the wife/mother leaves the family, the risks and problems are even more significant. It will change the role of the wife/mother, which is usually more dominant in the domestic aspect (Coe, 2011; Mulyana & Wirakusumah, 2019; Widodo, 2020) and often becomes one of the reasons for divorce (Miladiyanto, 2016; Widodo, 2020). Previous research has found a high risk of problems in left-behind children, such as dropping out of school (Démurger, 2015) and depression that affects children's development in the long term (Bakker et al., 2009). In Indonesia, a previous study also found complex issues regarding fulfilling children's basic rights (Syarif et al., 2017). Moreover, other problems occur, namely health, education, including school sustainability and academic achievement, and psychosocial skills, including social integration and emotional well-being (Bakker et al., 2009; Gomez, 2015). A systematic review and meta-analysis by Fellmeth et al. (2018) found that children left by their parents while working as migrants in low and middle-income countries are at risk for various health problems. Some of the documented problems are nutritional problems (stunting, poor nutrition, malnutrition, overweight, obesity, low birth weight, and anemia), mental health disorders (depression, anxiety, behavioral disorders, self-harm, and suicide), accidental injury, drug abuse, and infectious diseases. Children from migrant worker families are often labeled as "different" and potentially dangerous by other parents and teachers. In addition, because of receiving remittances, these children are rarely classified as "poor," and social programs tend to exclude these children (Salah, 2008).

However, several studies also found some good practices, such as migrant workers' families who can cope with good communication (Baihaqi et al., 2018; Utamidewi et al., 2017) and the replacement of parenting roles by fathers (Wulan et al., 2018). These negative impacts and good practices emphasize many aspects of family life that have been affected by migration. For example, it occurred in the structure and function of the nuclear family system, outward social mobility for women, and upward social mobility of the family, and it also changed the generational dynamics among male family members (Rahman, 2017).

Several studies of migrant families in Indonesia, especially PMI families, have provided an adequate description of the pattern of relations and communication in the family (Baihaqi et al., 2018; Utamidewi et al., 2017), adjustment of the role of husband/father in the families of female migrant workers (Mulyana & Wirakusumah, 2019; Widodo, 2020; Wulan et al., 2018), family resilience and its relation to financial and digital literacy (Laksono et al., 2019) remittance management to have a more positive impact on families, communities and regions (Caroline et al., 2019; Yuniarto, 2015), as well as the protection and improvement of the quality of migrant workers (Adam, 2017; Rahayu et al., 2020). However, studies on children of migrant families have only been found at the level of identifying the fulfillment of basic rights and the role of social capital in the community of children whose parents

become PMI (Syarif et al., 2017). Children whose parents do mobility as circular workers also have limitations in interacting with their parents. Children have psychological needs as the basis for parent-child interactions that will make children motivated to engage constructively with parents. This constructive relationship, in turn, makes children more cooperative with parental expectations, and they have more internalized behaviors and values socialized by parents (Skinner et al., 2005). In the situation when parents and children are separated due to the migration of parents to work, fulfilling these basic psychological needs will be difficult. The "voice of children" of migrant workers' families, which is still not widely heard in migration studies, is reinforced by the limited discussion of children in sociological studies, which is a space that needs to be deepened. The author sees this as the urgency of studying children in migrant worker families that needs to be carried out and deepened through the lens of sociological studies. It is because the migration of one family member to become a circular migrant worker or PMI is one of the livelihood strategies of the Indonesian people, especially in rural communities. It's just that the side of the children left behind is often very weak. Therefore, the "future of the child", which is the reason for parents to leave their children in their area of origin to seek a living in other areas or countries, needs to be "heard" and understood. These children's voices should be heard to convince them that their rights will be fulfilled properly and they can develop optimally. Children's well-being is one of the outcomes that can be a parameter of a child's condition (Moore et al., 2016), one of which is subjective well-being.

Subjective well-being is an important part of describing children's feelings when left by their parents. Subjective well-being consists of overall evaluative elements (life satisfaction) and satisfaction with different components of life, including relationships with family and friends, school, and health (Klocke et al., 2014). Newland et al. (2014) described indicators of subjective well-being of rural children (including life satisfaction, mental health, and self-image) as significantly correlated with all contexts of home, life, environment, school, and peers. When parents get support and assistance in raising children, they can optimize their children's social and emotional needs (Chu et al., 2010; Schor, 1995). In addition, in dealing with poverty and socioeconomic disparities, the optimization of children's health and quality of life increases when parents have access to social capital, get support and can properly carry out their parenting functions. The results of previous studies have found that children of migrant worker mothers feel less happy because of the mother's absence compared to non-migrant families. Likewise, children of fathers of migrant workers also have lower psychological well-being than children of fathers who are not migrant workers (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Jordan & Graham, 2012; Wong et al., 2009). These studies confirm that children from migrant worker families have lower well-being. Therefore, the subjective well-being of children of migrant families needs to be studied further, especially related to the availability of support that can be accessed by children from both the family and the surrounding social environment based on the typology of their parents' migrants.

Previous research has assessed children left by their mothers as PMP (Women Migrant Workers) and their fathers in Banyumas Regency (Wulan et al., 2018). However, children's perspectives are generally rarely found in studies of migrant workers in Indonesia. Patterns and strategies for parenting mothers who become migrant workers in Bandung City from the mother's perspective (Riasih, 2018) and parenting for PMP families in Sukabumi Regency from the father's perspective (Afriliani et al., 2021) have been carried out. However, study on parent-child interactions from the child's perspective is still limited. The study of the effect of migration on family life in Indonesia, where people carry out various types of migration, especially on children's lives from their children's perspective, still requires exploration due to the limited availability of publications. Rossi (2014) confirms that policymakers and researchers have focused more on the migration of adults flowing from developing to industrialized countries (also known as South-North migration), with little regard for the consequences for children in developing countries. Likewise, in Indonesia, studies on migration have not discussed its impact on children, especially those concentrated on the child's point of view.

In addition, studies that explore the well-being of the children of migrant worker families, both PMI families and circular migrants, in the context of the need to strengthen the nuclear family system are still limited. However, these left-behind children remain in the nuclear family system, which should be the main and first place for children to guarantee optimal growth and development in every aspect of their lives. One of the sociological theories that still dominates the perspective of family studies as the basic unit of society is the structural-functional approach. According to Law Number 52 of 2009 about Population Development and Family Development, the family is the smallest unit in a society consisting of husband and wife; or husband, wife and child; or father and child; or mother and child. It shows the

family structure in Indonesia's social system, which is legally recognized. Therefore, this study uses two approaches in sociology to explain the lives of left-behind children in migrant worker families. The first approach is the use of a Family Sociology perspective, especially a functionalist perspective rooted in Parsonian, and a Child Sociology perspective, especially the modern view, which views children as active agents in the social system rather than just passive agents who receive socialization (Qvortrup 1987, 2010, Mayall, 2013, Leonard, 2015). Although the approaches used in this study have different perspective of children, this study views children and families as a unified whole that influences each other. The functional perspective views parents as the main actors of socialization whose job is to internalize values to family members, especially children (Wallace 1995), so children tend to be seen as passive agents.

Meanwhile, the perspective of Child Sociology views children as not only recipients of socialization but as active agents who contribute to the running of the social system. "Children's voice" is an important indicator of their well-being condition. It's just that this "child's voice" is often overlooked (Phoenix, 2019). However, in the context of the Indonesian family, which still upholds the legal marriage bond as one of the basic values of life in society, dissecting the perspective of children cannot be separated from the context of family integrity as a social system unit. Therefore, this study takes the perspective of Parsonian functionalism which tends to direct the social system to a state of equilibrium (Wallace, 1995); which is controlled by the perspective of Child Sociology that views children as active agents in the social system.

Furthermore, this article wants to explore whether the availability of family-based social capital and social support as measured from the child's perspective can provide a resource to strengthen the nuclear family system of migrant workers, which is structurally separate. This article explores two typologies of parent migrant workers: circular migrant workers who work outside their origin region in Indonesia and migrant workers who work abroad as PMI (Indonesian Migrant Workers). The study of social capital and its relation to the phenomenon of migration has been reported in several previous studies. However, there is an interesting study conducted in a village in Malang Regency, East Java Province, which is also one of the migrant villages. The study found that households with higher social capital were able to send their family members for longer time as migrant workers (Prayitno et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, consummatory and instrumental community social capital plays a major role in supporting the care provided by substitute caregivers for PMP children (Syarif et al., 2017). Both studies indicate that social capital is an important component to be explored further in migrant worker families, especially from children's perspective. Social capital has great potential to minimize the social and psychological consequences of the limited conditions of society, especially poverty (Furstenberg & Kaplan, 2004). Poverty has led to weaker family ties and integration and ultimately caused children to lose family-based social capital that could contribute to children's well-being. The family is the central element as a mediation for the development of human capital (individuals), which also mediates the impact of globalization and community resources. However, conomic factors are often the main driver and this low economic condition indicates the low level of social capital owned and mobilized by families (Furstenberg & Kaplan, 2004). Therefore, the potential of family-based social capital needs to be recognized in the context of the lives of children from migrant worker families. It leads to the question, "How can the existence of family-based social capital from the perspective of children be used as a resource for increasing children's well-being of migrant worker families?".

In addition to family-based social capital, other studies have also found that migrant children tend to feel less family and community support and bully more (Cui & To, 2019). Social support is a fundamental need for individuals to continue social relationships, overcome loneliness, adapt to society, and maintain a stable psychological state (Gunuc & Dogan, 2013). In addition, other forms of social support, according to Cutrona et al. (1986), can be in the form of providing information, behavioral assistance, or material contained in close social relationships to make individuals feel cared for, valued, and loved to reduce the negative impact of various pressures. Kelley et al. (2011) shows that a decrease in social support will negatively affect children's emotions and behavior and negatively impact parents/caregivers physically and mentally. The results of Liu & Quan's (2018) research also show that teacher support, peer support, and beliefs about adversity positively predict the development of integrity. Family supports moderates the relationship between life events and integrity quality. Informal social support from family and friends is often highlighted as the main support for migrants under various transnational movements, particularly for female migrants (Baig & Chang, 2020). Social support, especially extended family support that replaces the care of transnational migrant mothers, is a common phenomenon among migrant families in Southeast Asia (Hoang et al., 2012). Therefore, understanding

the child's perspective on the social support that children receive leads to the question, "how do family children feel the existence of social support in encouraging the realization of prosperous children of migrant worker families?".

Therefore, it is expected that the two questions that have been formulated can be studied further in this article. This study aims to analyze the existence of family-based social capital from the perspective of children and to analyze the social support felt by children of migrant worker families based on the typology of parents' migrant work. It is hoped that the answers obtained from this study can find the potential of the nuclear family system, with the structure of separation between parents and children, to keep functioning optimally in realizing well-being, especially the subjective well-being of children from migrant workers' families. Even so, this study is still a preliminary study to explore the "child voice" of migrant worker families from a sociological perspective. The limited number of participants and the scope of the discussion still require development in further studies of migrant workers' children and families.

RESEARCH METHODS

Rossi (2009) stated that few migration studies on children's lives still use reliable quantitative methods. The study presented in this article is expected to enrich the results of studies on the lives of children of migrant worker families in Indonesia with a quantitative approach. Therefore, this study uses an explanatory design to answer the research objectives by using a survey-based quantitative approach. The research locations were chosen purposively, namely in Juntinyuat Village, Limbangan Village, and Dadap Village, Juntinyuat District, Indramayu Regency. Indramayu Regency was chosen purposively as the research location, considering that this district is one of the largest contributors to sending PMI abroad. In addition, Juntinyuat District was chosen as the research location because of one of the sub-districts contributing to PMI abroad in Indramayu Regency from 2018 to 2020, based on data from BP2MI (2020). The top five regencies as the origin of PMI are Indramayu, East Lombok, Cirebon, Cilacap, and Ponorogo. This research data collection was carried out in August-September 2021.

The population in this study were children from families of migrant workers in the research location, who were then selected using a snowball sampling technique, a type of non-probability sampling, to determine the research respondents. The children in this study were teenagers aged 12-18 years from migrant families. Initially, the prospective respondents were obtained from a key informant who is one of the activists in empowering the families of migrant workers in Juntinyuat Village. By using the snowball technique, after getting several respondents who match the criteria and are willing, the researcher then asks for recommendations from other prospective respondents who meet the criteria in the research location. The families of the migrant workers in question are divided into two groups. Firstly, families with a husband or wife or both were international migrant workers or Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Secondly, families with intranational migrant workers were characterized as families with a husband or wife or both did circular mobility between regions in Indonesia.

The data collection process was carried out by visiting prospective respondents, asking about their willingness, and asking for permission from their parents/caregivers. After they agreed, the children were selected to become research respondents and filled out the questionnaire themselves (self-administered) with the help and assistance of enumerators in the field. The number of child participants who became the samples of the study amounted to 120 people, consisting of 81 children from PMI migrant families and 39 children from circular migrant families. The number of sampled research is not balanced because, in the research location, the number of PMI families is more than the number of circular migrant families. The Commission has approved the entire research plan on Research Ethics Involving Human Subjects, Bogor Agricultural University; through Certificate of Passing the Ethics Review Number: 469/IT3.KEPMSM-IPB/SK/2021 dated 6 September 2021.

The primary data in this study include the characteristics of children (children's age, gender, number of siblings, education, and pocket money); characteristics of parents (age of father and mother, education of father and mother, migrant status of father and/or mother, and length of work of father and/or mother), family-based social capital, social support, and subjective well-being of children. Family-based social capital, social support, and children's subjective well-being are measured from the child's perspective. The variables of family-based social capital and social support felt by children identify the support felt by children from various systems outside themselves, starting from the nuclear family, extended family, and friends.

Family-based social capital in this study refers to the concept (Furstenberg & Kaplan, 2004), which suggests that social capital in the form of family-based social capital has the potential to overcome

various obstacles in realizing child well-being. Social capital variables were measured using a questionnaire that was referenced and modified from the Family Social Capital Questionnaire (Carrillo-Álvarez et al., 2019). Family-based social capital in this study contains dimensions of nuclear family-based social capital and extended family-based social capital. Referring to Carrillo-Álvarez et al. (2019), family-based social capital was assessed by seven dimensions. The dimensions are communication, conflict, sharing food with the nuclear family, sharing leisure time with the nuclear family, sharing leisure time with the extended family, cohesion with the nuclear family, and cohesion with the extended family. Family-based social capital was measured by 27 statements that were assessed from the child's perspective with answer choices using a scale of 1-6, with point 1 being an option if never at all and point 6 being an option if you always do the things in the questionnaire. Each dimension had a different number of statements. There were 7 statements for communication dimensions, 4 statements for conflict, 3 statements for sharing food with the nuclear family, 3 statements for sharing free time with the nuclear family, 3 statements for sharing free time with the extended family, 4 statements for cohesion with the nuclear family, and 3 statements for cohesion with the extended family. Cronbach's alpha as a parameter of the reliability of the family-based social capital questionnaire instrument in this study was 0.893.

Meanwhile, social support in this study refers to the importance of social support after exposure to critical events and trauma, so it is important to develop a psychometric instrument for measuring children's social support that is sensitive to various reliable sources of support (Gordon-Hollingsworth et al., 2016). Social support variables were measured using a questionnaire that was referenced and modified from the Social Support Questionnaire for Children (Gordon-Hollingsworth et al., 2016). The original questionnaire consisted of dimensions of parents, siblings, friends, kin, and adults. Researchers did not use the parental dimension because, in the overall study, researchers also measured the care children received from parents and substitute caregivers. Meanwhile, kin's social support refers to relatives who come from extended families. Therefore, the term kin support will be used later in this paper. This study's final questionnaire on the social support variable consisted of 85 statements. Each dimension has a different number of questions, 18 statements to measure sibling's social support, 21 statements to measure friends' social support, 21 to measure kin's social support, and 25 to measure adults' social support. The instrument used the choices "often," "sometimes," and "never" with a score of 3=often, 2=sometimes, 1=never, and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.961.Furthermore, for the child's subjective well-being variable, the researcher refers to the concept (Diener, 2000, 2009) about SWB (Subjective Well-Being), which refers to the concept of cognitive and affective evaluation of life, happiness, life satisfaction, and positive influences felt by a person. The variable of children's subjective well-being was measured using a questionnaire referred to from the CW-SWBS (Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale) (Borualogo & Casas, 2019), which has been used to assess the subjective well-being of children in Indonesia. The questionnaire consists of 6 statements with an answer scale of 0-10, with 0 points indicating the choice of completely disagreeing and 10 points meaning completely agreeing with the statements in the questionnaire; Cronbach's alpha value in this study was 0.904.

Data collection was carried out through self-administration, which was carried out directly by the participant's children accompanied by research enumerators. Furthermore, the data was processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The research transformed the total score of the variables of family-based social capital, social support, and a child's subjective well-being into an index score (0-100). In addition, to equalize the units so that the comparison of data categorization for each variable is uniform, the following cut-off points were used: low (0.0-60.0), medium (60.0-80.0), and high (80.0-100.0). Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum values of child and family characteristics, family-based social capital, social support, and child's subjective well-being, both generally and specifically-based on the typology of parents' migrant employment status. The inferential analysis examines the relationship between the characteristics of children and families, family-based social capital, social support, and a child's subjective well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Child's Characteristics

The results showed that more than half of the children of migrant worker families in this study were girls (55.0 percent), while the rest were boys, with an age range of 12 to 18 years, and the average age

of children was 14.57 years. The average education of children was grade 9 in junior high school, with the lowest education being grade 6 in primary school. Children of migrant workers' families in this study had average pocket money of IDR 475,333.3 per month (Table 1), with the smallest allowance of IDR 150,000.00 per month and the highest allowance of IDR 1,500,000.00 per month. Their number of siblings was 1 to 6, with an average of two siblings. Meanwhile, based on the birth order, almost three-quarters of children (61.7 percent) were in the order of the first child or commonly referred to as the eldest child.

Table 1. Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation index of left-behind child's characteristics

Child characteristics	n	Minimum-Maximum	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Child's age (years)	120	12-18	14,57±1,63
Number of siblings (person)	120	1-6	2,1±1,06
Children's education (years)	120	4-10	7,2±1,62
Pocket money (Rp/month)	120	150.000-1.500.000	475.333,3±190.981,24

Family's Characteristics

The results of the study (Figure 1) showed that there was 2.5 percent of children with both parents working as international migrant workers (PMI), while children with only fathers who were international migrant workers were 20.8 percent, smaller than children with only mothers who worked as international migrant workers (44.2 percent). Based on the age, the average age of the father was 44.58 years, and the average age of the mother was 40.83 years. If grouped by age range, the largest proportion of fathers (77.5 percent) aged 41-60 years, while the largest proportion of mothers (52.9 percent) was in the age range of 20-40 years. Based on the parental education, the largest proportion of mothers (51.7 percent) and fathers (40.8 percent) were elementary school graduates. Another result showed that the proportion of fathers who graduated from high school (23.3 percent) was greater than that of mothers (11.7 percent). Still, on the contrary, mothers (26.7 percent) who graduated from junior high school were greater than fathers (16.7 percent). This fact also shows that wives from migrant worker families have the largest proportion of younger ages with lower education than husbands.
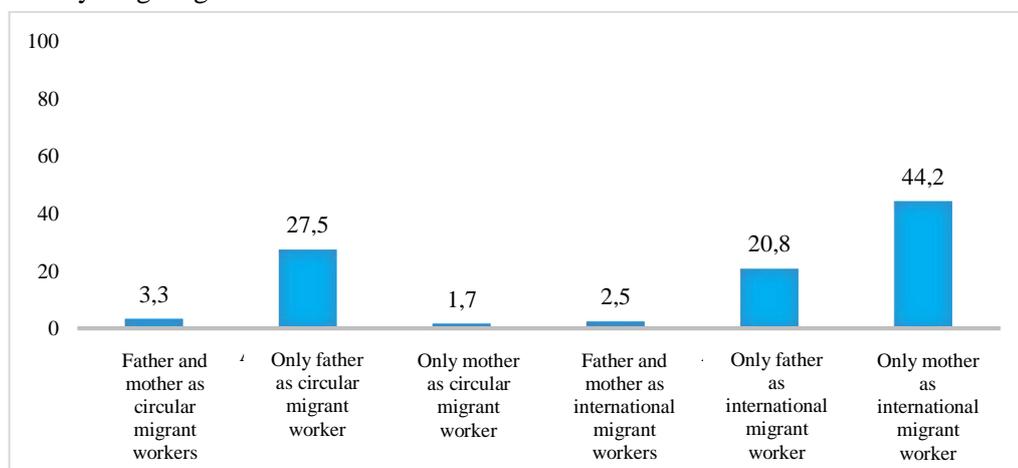
Figure 1. Distribution of left-behind children by parents' migrant work status

Furthermore, the results also showed that children with both parents who were circular migrant workers were 3.3 percent. In comparison, children with only fathers as circular migrant workers (27.5 percent) were greater than children whose mothers worked as circular migrant workers (1.7 percent). These results indicate that migrant workers' status of fathers and mothers have different phenomena in the research location. As migrant workers, mothers are mostly international migrant workers, and fathers are mostly intranational (circular) migrant workers. International migrant mothers worked as domestic workers in Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Hong Kong, and Iraq. On the other hand, the average father worked abroad as a fisherman in Taiwan, Qatar, Malaysia, Thailand, Uruguay, India, England, Abu Dhabi, and Africa. Meanwhile, father's occupations as circular migrant workers were quite diverse, ranging from fishermen, laborers, traders, entrepreneurs, employees, and security guards, and they were scattered in the areas of Jakarta, Banten, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Papua, Karawang, Subang, Batam, and the Riau Islands. Meanwhile, the mother's occupations as circular migrant workers were maids, laborers, and employees in Jakarta, East Java, and Cirebon.

Based on the length of work, the average father had been a migrant worker for 92.78 months or 7.7 years. Meanwhile, mothers' average work length was 69.23 months or about 5.7 years. Based on the employment status of migrants, the results showed that mothers who worked as international migrant workers (PMI) had an average length of work of 68.25 months or 5.68 years, with a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 204 months or 17 years. Meanwhile, mothers who worked as circular migrant workers had an average length of work of 80 months or 6.6 years, with a minimum of 12 months or one year and a maximum of 192 months or 16 years. Fathers who worked as international migrant workers (PMI) had an average length of work of 50.35 months or 4.19 years, with a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 216 months or 18 years. Meanwhile, fathers who worked as circular migrant workers had an average length of work of 127.29 months or 10.6 years, with a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 252 months or 21 years. Based on these data, the research found that the longest work period for mothers was as international migrant workers (PMI) and for the father was as circular migrant workers. This interesting phenomenon indicates that occupation as migrants carried out by fathers and mothers, both as international and intranational migrant workers, in some cases has been done by parents before the children were born. This fact shows that migrant work has become an integral part of the livelihood strategies at the research sites.

Primary Caregivers of Left-Behind Children: Shifting from Kinship-Based Parenting to Nuclear-Based Parenting

The results in Table 2 showed that the largest proportion of children were mothers who worked as international migrant workers (PMI) and were cared for by their fathers at home (24.2 percent). It is followed by children with fathers working as circular migrant workers and being cared for by their mothers (23.3 percent). These findings show that the biggest proportion of the left-behind children's caregiver at home is parents who stay at home. However, the study also found that 20.0 percent of left-behind children were cared for by extended family. These children mostly were left-behind children with mothers working as international migrant workers and being cared for by extended families such as a grandmother/grandfather or aunt/uncle. The study's results in Table 2 indicate that mothers as caregivers at home are still dominant in children whose fathers work as international or circular migrant workers. Interestingly, if the mother works as an international or circular migrant worker, the father remains dominant, but the parenting role of these children is replaced by extended families.

Table 2. Distribution of main caregivers of left-behind children by parent's migrant work status

Main caregiver	Parent's migrant work status												Total	
	1		2		3		4		5		6			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Father					1	0.8					29	24.2	31	25.8
Mother			28	23.3					20	16.6			48	40.0
Other caregivers (grandfather/grandmother /uncle/aunt)	4	3.3	5	4.2	1	0.8	3	2.5	5	4.2	24	20.0	41	34.2
Total	4	3.3	33	27.5	2	1.6	3	2.5	25	20.8	53	44.2	120	100.0

Note: (1) father and mother as circular migrant workers; (2) only father as circular migrant worker; (3) only mother as circular migrant worker; (4) father and mother as international migrant workers; (5) only father as international migrant worker; (6) only mother as international migrant worker

The results of this study indicate a slightly different phenomenon from the research of Setiawan et al., (2018) which found that most of the children of female migrant workers were raised by extended families such as grandmothers/grandparents or uncles/aunts (66.7 percent) and only 32 percent who were raised by his father. This study found that 24.2 percent of children were those of PMP who were cared for by their fathers, while other relatives raised 20.0% of PMP children. The findings show that in the research location, the role of the nuclear family still has a larger proportion in the care of left-behind children. In the study of family sociology, the phenomenon of migrant families is growing so rapidly, and its definition is also developing based on the mobility of family members, especially husbands and wives. Baldassar, Kilkey, Merla, and Wilding (2014) reveal that migrant families include various structures such as commuters, fly-in-fly-outs, frequent flyers, expatriates, and even multi-local families formed after divorce. The dynamics of family life due to migration have grown in recent decades, and the issue is not only intranational (migration within countries) but also transnational (migration between countries). Therefore, the impact of migration on the family system is even more dynamic. The phenomenon in this research location shows that the nuclear family still carries out the

nurturing function in a separate family structure. For children left by their mothers, both as international migrant workers and circular migrants, the proportion who are cared for by their fathers at home is still higher than that by extended families. The finding indicates that the theoretical implication of this study is to understand further the dynamics of the nuclear family during separation, especially in carrying out the functions and roles of raising children.

The Urgency of Strengthening Nuclear Family-Based Social Capital: Left-Behind Children's View

This study would like to analyze further children's assessment of family-based social capital and the social support the left-behind children receive. Family-based social capital in this study contains dimensions of nuclear family-based social capital and extended family-based social capital. Referring to Carrillo-Álvarez et al. (2019), family-based social capital in this study was assessed in seven dimensions, as mentioned before in the methods section.

Table 3 presents the total index and dimensions of family-based social capital for all children in this study, whose average index is 57.66. Another result also shows that the left-behind children perceive that the existence of family-based social capital is still low. This indication is revealed by the results (Figure 2), which show that about three out of five (63.3 percent) children perceive that their family has a low category of family-based social capital. Based on the assessment of left-behind children, the lowest average index is sharing time with extended family (37.11) and cohesion with extended family (48.88). These findings indicate that based on children's perceptions of family-based social capital, the strength is not on the existence of extended family-based social capital. The finding is interesting, considering that extended families are considered the "social cushion" for migrant worker families, especially for international migrant workers. The results of this study indicate that in the research location, family-based social capital, which, according to children, has higher achievement, comes precisely from the nuclear family. This is indicated by the achievement of the dimension of family cohesion which describes the cohesion in the nuclear family (73.75) which children assess as the dimension with the highest average index. When viewed based on the status of migrant workers, children left by both parents are the lowest proportion in this study (Figure 1). Therefore, the left-behind children, both as international migrant workers and circular migrant workers, assess that the bonding between nuclear family members as the form of nuclear family-based social capital is the highest compared to other family-based social capital dimensions.

Another interesting finding from this study can be seen in the index of conflict and communication dimensions. Referring to Carrillo-Álvarez et al. (2019), these two dimensions are assessed without separating the nuclear family from extended family. The study's results (Table 3) show that the average dimension of conflict is still higher than the communication dimension. This finding indicates that the left-behind children perceive that some forms of conflict within the family still occur. On the other hand, the family has not been able to build high family communication.

Table 3. Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation index of family-based social capital perceived by left-behind children

Dimensions of family social capital	n	Minimum-Maximum	Mean ± Standar Deviation
Communication	120	14,28-100,0	58,78±22,46
Conflict	120	0,0-100,0	59,58±23,78
Sharing family meals (nuclear family)	120	0,0-100,0	67,56±26,02
Sharing leisure time with family (nuclear family)	120	0,0-100,0	50,44±27,56
Sharing leisure time with family (extended family)	120	0,0-100,0	37,11±26,55
Cohesion with family (nuclear family)	120	15,0-100,0	73,75±22,85
Cohesion with family (extended family)	120	0,0-100,0	48,88±29,76
Total family social capital	**120**	**17,03-91,11**	**57,66±17,18**
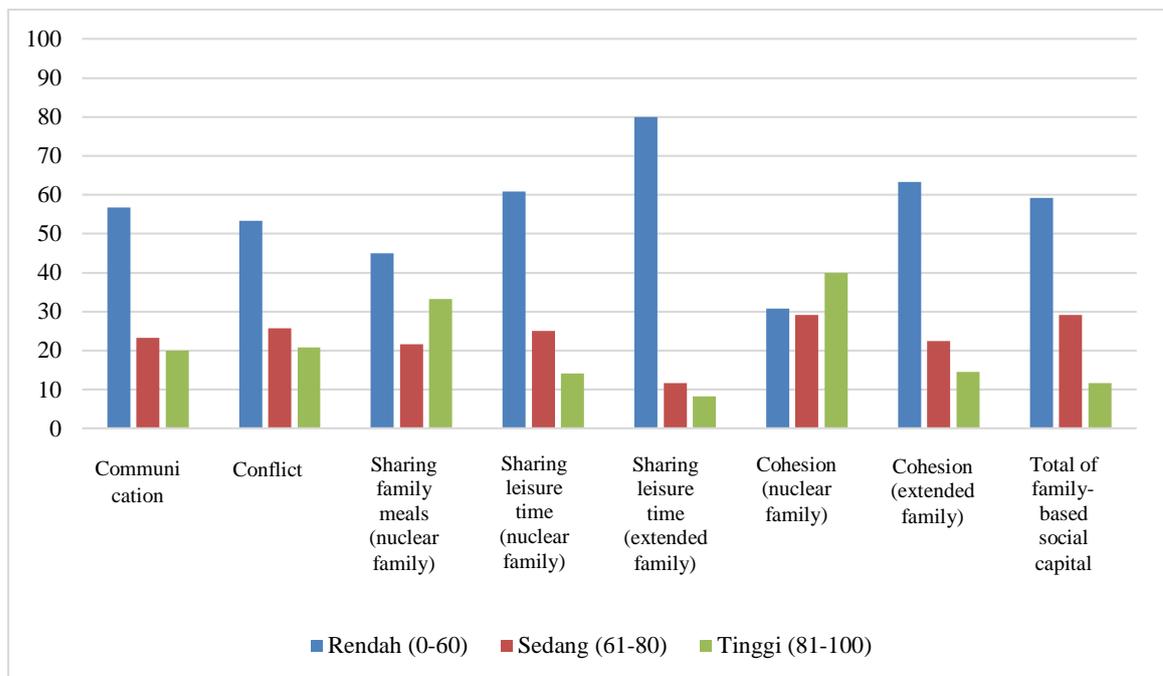
Figure 2. Distribution of left-behind children by category of family-based social capital

The achievement of family-based social capital in this study shows that there is still a need to improve its existence, considering the function of family-based social capital as a "tool" to improve children's well-being in families with limited resources (Furstenberg & Kaplan, 2004). This study focuses on family-based social capital, both nuclear and extended families. The findings lead to an indication that family-based social capital, especially that felt by children in nuclear families, has higher achievements than large families even though these children are separated from their parents. This finding could confirm what Talcott Parsons said almost seven decades ago. Parsons and Bales (2014) state that the major structural changes in social systems will inevitably involve strain and disorganization. Detection of "symptoms" of disorganization that occurs is an important key. Symptoms of disorganization in the form of marital relationship risk (Miladiyanto, 2016; Widodo, 2020) as well as child quality (Bakker et al., 2009, Démurger, 2015, Fellmeth et al., 2018) generated in the previous research and the perspective of children from migrant worker families confirm that the findings of this study emphasize the importance of strengthening nuclear family-based social capital by focusing on strengthening cohesion and conflict management to improve the quality of parent-child interactions in migrant families. The hope is that this can continue to make the family which Parsons and Bales (2014) call a "family home", and it can optimize the fulfillment of children's rights through guaranteeing parent-child relationships (Jayasuriya, 2021).
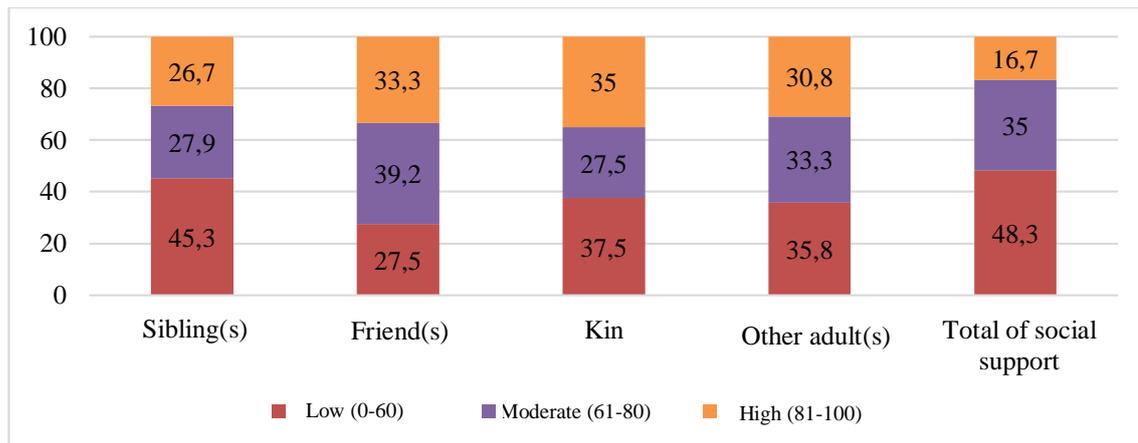
Social Support based on Left-Behind Children's View: Weakening of Extended Family Support and Strengthening of Peer Support

A study found that social support is the most important factor in dealing with stress experienced by left-behind children (Zhang et al., 2022). The study assessed the social support perceived by left-behind children from four sources: siblings, friends, kin (extended family), and adults. The study's results (Table 4) found that in a total of social support revealed, the mean index was 60.72. This finding indicates that the left-behind children perceived the level of social support as still not high. The highest average was social support from friends.

Table 4. Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation index of social support perceived by left-behind children

Social Support Source	n	Minimum-Maximum	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Sibling(s)	86	19.44-100.0	62.91±22.44
Friend(s)	120	7.14-100.0	71.15±17.88
Kin (extended family)	120	9.52-100.0	68.33±21.11
Other adult(s)	120	0.0-100.0	67.01±24.46
Total social support	**120**	**4.71-100.0**	**60.72±19.94**

Based on the group category (Figure 3), the results showed that the largest proportion in the low category was found in the social support of siblings. This finding confirms that social support from the siblings was the lowest compared to other sources of social support. In this research, the left-behind children with siblings were 71.67 percent of all respondents. The number of siblings was between 1 to 6 people with an age range of 12 years to 18 years. The low average of social support from siblings compared to other sources of social support (friends, kin, and adults) could be seen from the item analysis of the questionnaire. The left-behind children enjoyed time with their siblings (57.0 percent), felt that their siblings never understood them (23.3 percent), felt that their siblings never supported their decisions (26.7 percent), felt that their siblings never gave good advice (24.4 percent), felt that their siblings never bought them things (36 0.0 percent), felt that their siblings never helped to identify themselves well (20.9 percent), and felt that their siblings could never be trusted to keep secrets (30.2 percent). This finding confirms Tolentino and Arcinas' (2018) finding, which stated that the number of siblings could be associated with a decrease or increase in support for family experiences and involvement in activities.
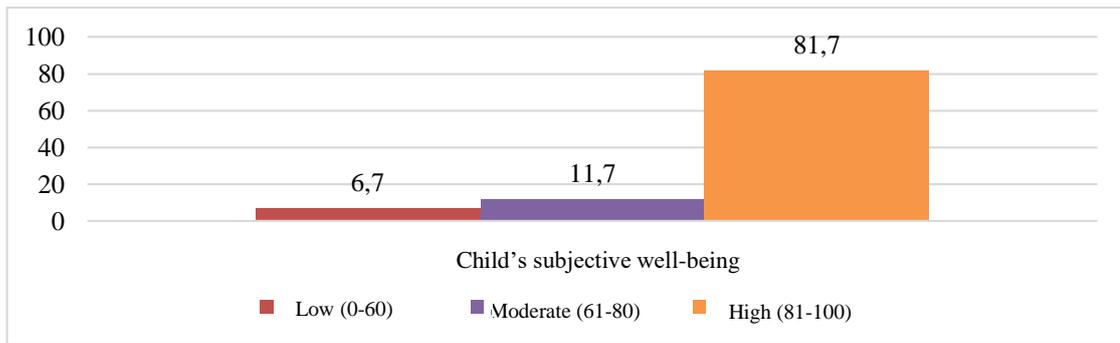

Figure 3. Distribution of left-behind children by category of social support

Furthermore, social support from kin is defined as someone from extended family (Gordon-Hollingsworth et al., 2016); the average index is also lower than social support from friends (Table 4). This finding is interesting considering that the extended family is believed to be the provider of support for the family. This study found that left-behind children felt they received more support from their peers.

In addition, this study also analyzes the adult support that the child feels. Adults in this study refer to someone who is grown up besides parents and extended family, such as teachers. The study found that the adult dimension of social support was quite good. The results showed that children felt that there were adults who could be relied upon (52.5 percent), there were adults who listened to them (46.7 percent), there were adults who showed affection (56.7 percent), there were adults who always cared about their feelings (50.0 percent), and there were adults who always gave advice (61.7 percent). These findings indicate that the left-behind children get enough support from adults around them so that the children feel comfortable. In addition, the study found that the children, who were on average junior high and senior high school students, felt greatly helped by the support that came from their peers, even when compared to siblings. The finding also indicates that programs to increase support for children from migrant families on a friendship basis are necessary.

Subjective Well-being of Left-behind Children

This study assessed well-being regarding the subjectively perceived dimensions of left-behind children. The study found that the average index of the left-behind children's subjective well-being was 89.19. The proportion of children who perceived their subjective well-being in the high category was 81.7 percent. The rest are categorized as moderate (11.7 percent) and categorized as low (6.7 percent) (Figure 4). These findings indicate that most left-behind children feel happy with their current condition. This finding is certainly interesting, considering that these children must be separated from one or both parents. Even so, children still feel that they could enjoy life, feel that the life they are going through is going well, feel they have a good life, feel that things that are happening in life are very good, like the life they are living, and feel happy/happy with their current life. The results also indicate that even though they are separated from their parents, children's satisfaction with life is great.

Figure 4. Distribution of left-behind children's subjective well-being

This study assessed the left-behind children's subjective well-being with six questions. The result revealed that 86.7 percent of children feel that they enjoy their lives, they also feel that they have a good life (81.7 percent), and children also feel happy with their lives (80.8 percent). Even so, it is still found that children have low subjective well-being. These children feel that they do not feel that their lives are going well (8.3 percent), some children feel that things happening in their lives are not good (5.8 percent), and it is found that 5.0 percent of children who have not to love his life. Based on this description, children generally judge and feel happy with their current life even though they must be separated from their parents. This finding shows the other side of exploring children's well-being in subjective parameters related to what the child feels. In a study conducted by Moore et al. (2016), child's well-being can also be measured in several domains; namely cognitive and academic development, social emotion, social behavior, physical health, and the social relationships children build. However, this research still focuses on children's subjective well-being as an assessment of their life. The results, which show that left-behind children are mostly happy with their lives, indicate that further studies are needed to be enriched with concepts of Moore et al. (2016) to deepen the analysis of well-being condition of left-behind children in more objective parameters.

Family-Based Social Capital, Social Support, and Left-Behind Children Subjective Well-being based on Parents' Migrant Work Status

Family-Based Social Capital based on Parent's Migrant Work Status. Based on the migrant work status of parents, this study found that the highest average index (60.62) of family-based social capital was in children whose father worked abroad (international migrant workers). Meanwhile, the study also found the lowest average index (53.78) was in children whose fathers worked outside the region (circular migrant worker). Furthermore, based on the social capital dimension and parents' migrant status, the study found that the highest average index (82.5) was in the family cohesion dimension with children whose fathers and mothers both worked outside the region (circular migrant worker). Meanwhile, the lowest highest average index was in the dimension of sharing leisure time with extended family (23.33) with the status of migrant mothers working outside the region (Table 5).

Table 5. Mean index of family-based social capital by parents' migrant work status

Dimensions of social capital	Parent's migrant work status					
	1 (n = 4)	2 (n = 33)	3 (n = 2)	4 (n = 3)	5 (n = 25)	6 (n = 53)
Communication	56.42	50.64	68.58	64.76	59.98	62.74
Conflict	48.75	62.57	50.0	56.67	60.60	58.58
Sharing family meals (nuclear family)	50.0	61.01	70.0	64.44	70.13	71.82
Sharing leisure time with family (nuclear family)	50.0	47.07	56.67	35.59	57.60	49.81
Sharing leisure time with family (extended family)	31.67	33.73	23.33	44.44	41.86	37.48
Cohesion with family (nuclear family)	82.5	71.81	72.5	63.33	75.6	74.05
Cohesion with family (extended family)	61.67	44.84	36.67	48.89	54.40	48.3
Total family social capital	55.55	53.78	55.67	56.05	60.62	58.95

Note: (1) father and mother as circular migrant workers; (2) only father as circular migrant worker; (3) only mother as circular migrant worker; (4) father and mother as international migrant workers; (5) only father as international migrant worker; (6) only mother as international migrant worker

In general, in children whose parents worked as circular migrant workers, the lowest family-based social capital was in children whose fathers worked as circular migrant workers. Meanwhile, in international

migrant worker (PMI) families, the lowest family-based social capital was in children whose parents both worked as international migrant workers (PMI). Social capital can mediate family socioeconomic conditions and child well-being (Kühner et al., 2021). Social capital is part of child protection resources to optimize children's well-being regardless of socioeconomic disparities. However, this study found low family-based social capital. Regarding the need for left-behind children with a risk of problems in school behavior, self-confidence, loneliness, and health (Murphy et al., 2016), family-based social capital should be increased, especially based on the nuclear family system. The increase is needed because the nuclear family for left-behind children in this study is still the main institution in their lives.

Social Support based on Parent's Migrant Work Status. Based on the migrant works status of the parents, the results showed that the social support with the highest average index (62.04) was in children whose fathers worked outside the region (circular migrant). Meanwhile, the lowest average index (55.58) was in children whose mothers worked outside the area (circular migrant). Furthermore, based on each dimension of social support, the highest average index was in the dimension of social support that came from adults around children (78.0) and children whose mothers worked outside the area (circular migrant). On the other hand, the lowest was in dimensions of social support from siblings (51.38) and children whose fathers and mothers worked abroad (Table 6).

Table 6. Mean index of social support based on parents' migrant work status

Sources of social support	Parent's migrant status					
	1 (n = 4)	2 (n = 33)	3 (n = 2)	4 (n = 3)	5 (n = 25)	6 (n = 53)
Sibling(s)	70.83	65.97	61.11	51.38	57.50	63.89
Friend(s)	76.19	67.89	64.28	70.63	70.00	73.62
Kin (extended family)	70.23	66.23	63.09	73.80	65.90	70.53
Other adult(s)	72.5	63.45	78.00	70.67	66.32	68.52
Total social support	59.7	62.04	55.58	60.19	60.70	60.19

Note: (1) father and mother as circular migrant workers; (2) only father as circular migrant worker; (3) only mother as circular migrant worker; (4) father and mother as international migrant workers; (5) only father as international migrant worker; (6) only mother as international migrant worker

The results in Table 6 show that children left by their mothers, either as circular migrants or international migrant workers, tend to rate their perceived social support as low. This is because the mother is often the person who provides emotional support to the child. Parental social support, especially emotional support, which is quite good, will describe the condition of children with better self-perception and low levels of depression (Wang et al., 2019). These findings indicate that the absence of mothers in the lives of left-behind children in this study requires higher social support.

Subjective Well-being of Children based on Parent's Migrant Employment Status. The results showed that based on the migrant works status of the parents, the average index of the left-behind children's subjective well-being was 100.0 for children whose father and mother worked as circular migrant workers, 90.4 for children with only fathers working as circular migrant workers, 100.0 for children with only mothers who worked as circular migrant workers, 59.25 for children whose father and mother worked as international migrant workers, 86.67 for children with only fathers who worked as international migrant workers, and 90.11 for children with only mothers who work as international migrant workers. This finding indicates that children whose parents work as international migrant workers are the most vulnerable to unhappiness. In addition, children from international migrant workers' families are also indicated to be more prone to be unhappy compared to children from circular migrant worker families. This can happen because when parents become PMI, the opportunity to meet children has a smaller frequency due to contractual ties, long distances, and the need for greater costs to return home. Interestingly, this study found that children whose mothers were left as PMIs had a higher average subjective well-being than children whose fathers were left as PMIs. When compared to the variables of family-based social capital and social support, children whose mothers become migrant workers are the children with the lowest achievement in both variables. These findings lead to the need for further exploration of the well-being of left-behind children with more comprehensive parameters, both subjective and objective, and the impact of the absence of fathers and mothers of migrant workers on these well-being parameters, including qualitative deepening of the definition of well-being according to left-behind children.

CONCLUSION

There are still limited studies on left-behind children of migrant families in Indonesia, especially those that examine children's views on their lives as children of migrant families, including comparisons between children from international migrant workers' (PMI) and circular migrant workers' families. This study uses subjective well-being parameters as a child's assessment of his condition. The results showed that most of the children of migrant families were happy with their lives. However, research has found that children from international migrant workers (PMI) families are more likely to be unhappy or have lower subjective well-being than children from circular migrant worker families. Furthermore, based on the parent's migrant work status, children whose mothers left them also consistently tended to have lower subjective well-being. In addition, based on the child's assessment, the social support felt by children whose mothers work as international migrant workers (PMI) is also the lowest compared to another status of migrant workers. Based on these findings, children from PMI families, especially those whose mothers work as PMIs, are a group of children more vulnerable than other groups of children.

In addition, the results also found that the largest proportion of children was cared for by the left-behind or stay-at-home parent, not extended family. The left-behind parent will raise the child and this finding confirms that the nuclear family is still the main institution in children's lives even though they have a separate family structure due to their parents working as immigrant workers outside the region or abroad. This finding is also reinforced by findings related to family-based social capital in which left-behind children still value the dimensions of the nuclear family higher than extended families. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out efforts to strengthen the nuclear family system. Referring to the dimensions of family-based social capital, strengthening the nuclear family could be done by improving the quality of communication, increasing the ability of families in conflict resolution, increasing cohesion between nuclear family members, and also increasing the quantity and quality of time between members of the nuclear family even though they are separated.

The perspective of Child Sociology in this study allows exploring the views of children in identifying family-based social capital, social support, and subjective well-being perceived by left-behind children as children of migrant workers' families. "Children's voices" are becoming more audible and empirically documented. Meanwhile, in the Parsonian frame as a Family Sociology perspective used in this study, children have the view that in family disorganization with a separate family structure, nuclear family cohesiveness is seen as an important component in the family. This emphasizes that migrant worker families need to rediscover what Talcott Parsons calls the "root functions" of the family. Therefore, this study is expected to be able to encourage further studies on children and families of migrant workers in Indonesia with various variations using the perspectives of Child Sociology and Family Sociology simultaneously. It is hoped that this study and the follow-up studies will be able to encourage national policies for migrant worker families that are more in favor of the parent-child relationship so that the children of migrant workers who are not always accompanied by their parents during their growth and development can still grow and develop optimally to build a better future.

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