

Hardiness Personality in Young Adults with Divorced Parents

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Abstract: *The reactions of children experiencing parental divorce are diverse. Not all children who become victim of divorce are negatively affected by the separation of their parents. However, the divorce of parents must have consequences and effects on the condition of children or young adults in living their lives. The purpose of this study is to find out what personalities possessed by young adults with divorced parents and how they interpret parental divorce. The research method used is qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. In-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher to uncover the meaning of phenomena experienced by the subjects. Research subjects were young adults who had divorced parents, aged 18-26 years, and both parents were still alive. Data were analyzed using a phenomenological analysis technique. The results show that a hardiness personality description has been developed in a new theme of hardiness personality, which is optimistic for a better future, looking at life positively, grateful, and unwilling to run away from the problems or trying to do harmful things.*

Keywords: *hardiness personality, young adults, divorced parents*

Introduction

Nowadays, the number of divorces has experienced an increase, which equally indicates an increase in the number of children who become innocent victims of divorce. This has a negative impact on children, such as emotional instability, anxiety, confusion, injury, depression, and anger. Amato (2010) explains that divorce is related to other events that make children stressed, such as moving into a new house, transferring to other schools, dealing with the remarriage of the parents, and losing contact with grandparents.

Despite the difficulties caused by the divorce of parents in early childhood, other things still work well for the children, such as socializing, being accepted by peers, or communicating with parents despite living separately from one or even both parents. Children who are cared for by one of their parents still have the time and attention of both parents even though sometimes the communication with either parent can only happen via telecommunication. In this case, the child remains under control in terms of education and friendship.

However, the impact of divorce does not stop at childhood. Children continue to grow and develop in a family condition that is no longer intact as before. After a divorce, there is a high risk of internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior, reducing academic performance, dropping out of school, and using drugs. Likewise, there is an increased risk of mental health problems, decreased educational and work performance, and decreased welfare and the quality of relationships in adulthood, and worse marriages in adulthood (Carr & Wolchik, 2015; Riggio, 2008)

From the results of several studies, the reactions that

arise from divorce events vary greatly. Divorce does not always have a negative impact on children. Not all children are negatively affected by the separation of their parents. Some children think that the failure of their parents is a valuable lesson for their future, and they become strong and steadfast in accepting this situation. These kinds of children have a strong personality or resiliency. For this reason, the researcher is interested in conducting research involving young adults with divorced parents in order to get a picture of how they interpret divorce and have a hardiness personality for a bright future.

Hardiness personality (Kobasa et al., 1982; Baumeister, 2007; Maddi, 2013) is a personality constellation that makes individuals strong, resistant, stable, and optimistic in facing problems and take them as a challenge. In this case, individuals are able to manage and respond to stressful events by reducing adverse effects and turning potentially bad environments into opportunities for learning. According to Moorhead & Griffin (2013), people with hardiness personalities have an internal locus of control that makes them very committed to activities in their lives and sees change as an opportunity to progress and develop.

Santrock (2012) explains that early adulthood is a time for work and relationships with the opposite sex, sometimes leaving little time for other things. Early adulthood begins with a transition from adolescence to adulthood, which involves experimentation and exploration called emerging adulthood. At this time, individuals have experienced certain physical and psychological changes along with the problems and hopes for these changes.

Divorce is the culmination of poor marital adjustments and occurs when a husband and wife are no longer able to

find ways of solving problems that can satisfy both parties. The two then decided to leave each other and stop carrying out their roles as husband and wife, but not as parents because there were children in between (Hurlock, 1997).

Method

This study used qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. The use of this approach aims to describe the meaning of life events experienced by some individuals related to particular concepts or phenomena by exploring human consciousness. Participants were young adults with divorced parents and aged 18 - 26 years. They were chosen based on the classification of the effects of divorce, namely the positive impact of divorce and parents since the subject was in their childhood. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the research subjects.

The data analysis technique used was a thematic analysis technique that aims to analyze the meaning based on prominent themes related to the categories in the research objectives (Hanurawan, 2016). The validity of the data in this study used interpretive validity. Hanurawan (2016) explains that this type of validity is the validity of an accurate deepest subjective complete description (deep subjective meaning) that is verified by the subject about the object of the research phenomenon. Data validity checking was done by comparing the obtained data with several other data sources.

Results

From the results of the study, four main themes related to the Hardiness Personality in young adults with divorced parents were identified:

1. Optimistic for a better future
2. Looking at life positively
3. Feeling grateful
4. Unwilling to run away from problems or trying to do harmful things

Theme 1. Optimistic for a better future

Life without parents made the participant optimistic in living life. They did not think that the divorce of parents lowers their motivation to learn. They tried to be independent and motivate themselves for the future. The participant remained enthusiastic in learning, continued their studies in college even though some did not live with their parents. They wanted to graduate from college on time, find work, be independent, and be able to help the mother financially.

They did not feel worried either about failure in building a relationship. They felt optimistic about living better, especially in relationships, and learned from their parents' experience. They felt they could control their minds not to be traumatized by failure in marriage. Even though they had divorced parents, they did not feel hopeless and continued to communicate well with their parents, especially about their future plans.

Theme 2. Looking at life positively

Participants admitted that they had been trying to control themselves and the mind to continue to live well without parents. Initially, the subject found it difficult because they sometimes felt jealous of other friends who lived with both parents. However, they eventually got used to living with one parent or without parents. Subjects were feeling grateful and praying to eliminate worries and trying to look at life positively by surrendering to the Almighty and eliminating negative feelings. They tried to accept their destiny and continued to think positively that each child with divorced parents has a different way of responding to things, depending on the individual. There is a male subject who felt that he was a calm person. He tried not to show concern for the condition of divorced parents.

Since the divorce of the parents, the feeling that dominated the participants was a disappointment, not anger. They tried to accept and think positively that nobody is perfect. There was a participant who had not talked to his parents since the divorce, but it only happened for a few months until he accepted reality. Another participant mentioned that she was disappointed by the parent's divorce but still wanted to talk to both of them. She said that everyone could make a mistake. She did not agree with the attitude of the child who blamed the divorced parents, and she assumed that parents had their own problems. However, she confessed that sometimes, she was worried about the possibility of a broken relationship in the future, although she managed to let it go by remembering her mother's motivation and learning from her parents' experience.

Theme 3. Feeling grateful

Participants tried to ignore the adverse effects of parental divorce and did not consider it an obstacle to their life. They felt they could live a good life without having to be jealous of other people's normal lives. They were more grateful because of the smooth interaction and communication with parents, either with a mother living at home or with fathers not living at home anymore.

Also, one of the participants felt more grateful for his condition by seeing many other children who were in worse situations as a result of the parents' divorce. Although he was born from a divorced family, he did not even try using drugs or drinking alcohol. At times of distress, he just kept quiet and chose to sleep at his grandmother's house for some time.

Theme 4. Unwilling to run away from problems or trying to do harmful things

Participants accepted the parents' condition by showing empathy. As they grew up, they understood the situation even better, given that the working mother was now the breadwinner of the family. They tried to control themselves from the desire to spend money unnecessarily to help

manage their mother's financial flow. They did not want to burden their mother by talking about the father when they were lonely. They chose to share their sadness with their brother or sister or boy/girlfriend. They also showed empathy by doing well in their studies to make their mothers, who paid for their school, happy.

Participants also tried to accept the situation where the parents remarried to another person without feeling angry or ignorant. Although sometimes they felt unusual feelings because their stepfather might not be the same as their own father, they tried to get used to receiving their stepfather, being friendly, and talking to him. However, they prefer to talk about personal matters with their siblings.

Discussion

According to Maddi (2013), there are three general characteristics of people with hardiness personality:

- a. Believing that they can control and influence the events that occur in their lives,
 - b. Having a profound role or a high sense of commitment to events that occur in their life,
 - c. Seeing changes as an opportunity to develop themselves
- These characteristics are closely related to the themes that have been identified in this study.

This study found that the participants had a sense of optimism, looked at life positively, felt grateful, and accepted the condition of their divorced parents. It makes them feel confident that their lives can be different from what their divorced parents have experienced. The participants believe that they are indeed different from others who live with both parents, but they still have the opportunity to develop better in terms of career, social, and marriage.

One of the dimensional concepts offered by Maddi (2013) is control, which represents an individual's ability to remain in a stressful environment and makes it an opportunity to learn and grow. The control owned by the participants makes them able to manage any events after the divorce of their parents so that they are not easily depressed. The subject can control the process of personal decision-making or can choose freely the actions that can be taken. They can prevent the adverse effects of divorce by completely avoiding negative reactions like using illegal drugs, having free sex, or quitting college. Instead, they chose to finish their studies on time, maintain communication with their parents, and confidently deal with the traumatized feeling of dating someone and get married.

Gender also influences one's behavior. Bartone & Priest (2001) mention that men and women have differences in dealing with problems that occur in their life. Women have become accustomed to thinking about pain starting from the menstrual cycle every month, conceiving, giving birth, thus being patient, relentless, and gentle. In contrast, men prefer to argue things that make sense and are more selfish in talking about things. Different tasks

carried out by men and women make gender a predictor in determining individual hardiness. From the identification of themes, it can be seen that male subjects use logic, observation, and make themselves calm by avoiding sources of stress, but he still empathizes with his mother.

Conclusion

The divorce of husband and wife does not entirely stop them from playing their role as parents. Not all children are negatively affected by divorce. Children with proper adjustment after the divorce find positive meaning from their parents' divorce so that they can create a better future. Although some children may feel disappointed at first, many of them move on as they grew up and display hardiness personality in their adolescence. It helps them accept the situation of their parents more easily. The adolescents with hardiness personality can look at life positively, have optimism for the future by making their parents' marriage failure a lesson learned for their future without feeling afraid or worried about getting married, having a career, and building a good social relationship.

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