



# Self-concept and Future Orientation in Adolescents with Divorced Parents

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**Abstract.** Adolescents with divorced parents need to have a future orientation to successfully transition into adulthood. Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between self-concept and future orientation in adolescents with divorced parents. The hypothesis states that a positive relationship exists between future orientation and self-concept in adolescents with divorced parents. Moreover, adaptations of the Future orientation scale (15 items) developed by Steinberg et al. [1] and the shortened scale AF-5 version by García-Grau et al. [2] were applied. The subjects employed amounted to 102 including both the male and female gender. The results showed a positive relationship with a 0.227 correlation coefficient and 0.011 significance. This implies the hypothesis is accepted, and the higher/positive the self-concept, the higher/stronger the future orientation.

**Keywords:** future orientation · self-concept · adolescents with divorced parents

## 1 Introduction

Future orientation is a self-description that individuals have about their future lives. This is defined by how the future can be described as evidenced by the existence of goal setting, planning, and action formed from the interaction between past and present experiences [1–3]. It is also explained as a development stage characterized by planning, time orientation, and anticipation of future consequences [1].

Adolescents who experience parental divorce encounter problems concerning future orientation. In this study, several cases capable of illustrating the low future orientation of such individuals were assessed. Furthermore, they were found with problems in terms of education, family, and work [4]. The commissioners of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission reported 11,492 cases of children in conflict with the law, which include bullying, rape, drug use, illegal drugs, and pornography from 2011 – 2019 [5], where some of the perpetrators are adolescents with divorced parents [6]. Previous studies revealed that the subjects had deviant behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and rape [7].

Supposing future orientation is associated with the above phenomena, then it can be described as follows. The existence of behavioral problems in adolescents such as juvenile delinquency, usage of illegal drugs, and problems related to careers indicates their low orientation [8, 9] and will increase the probability of those experiencing parental

divorce [10]. An orientation that tends to focus on the present makes adolescents unable to create mature plans to achieve a better future [1].

Future orientation is one of the developmental tasks at every age but it becomes crucial once adolescence is reached, specifically including the vulnerable group, namely those with divorced parents. Future orientation will lead these individuals to find their identity [11], emotional, and social skills, as well as acceptance and self-confidence [12]. This is in line with the conclusions of Carstensen, Husman, Lensen, and Erikson concerning the reasons why adolescents need future orientation, for example, to increase motivation, particularly in people of school-age [13]. Future orientation is one of the important constructs in health and well-being, which help to successfully transition into adulthood [14]. Additionally, its low level causes vulnerability to bad influences from the environment [15] and low academic achievement [3, 16], as well as easy involvement with impulsive attitudes and risky sexual behavior [17].

The experience of parental divorce triggers the need to try harder emotionally and socially [18]. Family context plays an important role in shaping future orientation [9]. Therefore, divorce is included as one of the stressful events that harm the future orientation of adolescents [19]. Attachment to family [20], parent-child communication [21], and family functioning [22], determine the ability to be future-oriented, but these two supporting factors differ in conditions between adolescents with intact or divorced parents. Incomplete family structures increase the risk of low future orientation such as reduced tendencies to think about the future, the anticipation of consequences, and the inability to create plans properly [23]. Additionally, divorce amplifies the possibility of losing the central figure that ought to help, supervise, and communicate with adolescents on how to build positive images and thoughts about the future [23].

Many factors capable of influencing future orientation has been discovered. The first is demographic factors such as education level [24], age [1], and gender [25]. The second is internal factors such as cognitive maturity [24], resilience [26], personality [3], and self-concept [27, 28]. The external comprises family or parenting, social support, social roles [3, 15], socio-economic status/SES [29], and culture [30, 31].

There are several existing discussions on the relationship of self-concept with future orientation. First, a study on 132 Swedish adolescents with an average age of 18.5 years found a positive relationship between self-concept consistency and future orientation [32]. Based on the explanation, those with consistent self-concepts had positive descriptions of the future. Furthermore, in 12 deaf adolescents aged 17–21 years, a positive correlation was detected between self-concept and future orientation in the field of education with  $r = 0.84$  and  $p = 0.05$  [27]. Similar results were obtained in 48 individuals aged 14–20 years, where academic self-concept significantly predicts future orientation with  $p = 0.042$  [33].

Based on the mapping of the studies above, several discussions exist on future orientation and its relationship to self-concept in various subjects. However, some gaps are yet to be examined, and there is no publication on the relationship of self-concept with future orientation specifically in the context of adolescents who experience parental divorce. Therefore, adhering to the previous description, this relationship needs to be considered.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of Future Orientation

Previous studies provided various definitions for future orientation. [9] described it as an ability to focus on hope and effort and evaluate both to achieve well in the future. [3] stated that future orientation is the hopes, goals, and plans that individuals have in different domains of life which will affect how they act in the present. Similarly, [1] defined it as the extent to which individuals can perform self-reflection by planning, drawing, and anticipating the future.

### 2.2 Future Orientation Aspects

The three aspects of future orientation [1] are as follows:

- Planning Ahead

Planning ahead means the individual ability to determine and create plans every time something needs to be completed and achieved. This is followed by supportive actions such as making a list of things to do, based on careful consideration.

- Time Perspective

This dimension refers to being capable of thinking and projecting oneself over some time. A person with a good time perspective believes that the past, present, and future are interconnected. With this ability, it is easier to know the right steps to take as well as things to give up currently for the attainment of a better future.

- Anticipation of Future Consequences

This dimension refers to the ability to make decisions based on the good and bad consequences of each plan. How every action will affect oneself or others becomes the main focus of individuals in deciding and acting.

### 2.3 Definition of Self-concept

Self-concept is a complex construct related to an assessment of oneself as a whole. In another definition, it is stated as an individual's meaning of each event which ultimately forms a stable self-assessment in various settings (academic and non-academic) [34]. Self-assessment is given based on habits, intellectual status in school, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, and happiness [35]. Furthermore, self-concept is mentioned as a conscious assessment in terms of academics/work, social condition, emotion, family, and physical attributes [2].

## 2.4 Aspects of Self-concept

The five aspects of self-concept [2] are as follows:

- Academic/work self-concept

Individual perceptions of quality and involvement in work or academics.

- Social self-concept

This refers to the perception of the social setting, including the extent to which social networks are owned, as well as how individuals build and maintain relationships with other situations and people.

- Emotional self-concept

This dimension discusses how individuals assess their emotional state both generally and specifically. It also includes the way responses are made to various situations. A good emotional self-concept is said to be possessed when being able to give the right reaction according to any situation encountered.

- Family self-concept

This refers to a perception of involvement and attachment in the family. This is related to whether an individual feels love and support from the family or vice versa.

- Physical self-concept

This describes the assessment of physical appearance. It concerns the degree to which individuals feel they have physical attractiveness, therefore being liked by others. The ability to take care of oneself also arises from this dimension.

## 2.5 Theoretical Foundations of Self-Concept and Future Orientation in Adolescents with Divorced Parents

The following is a review of the literature on the theoretical framework of self-concept related to future orientation with a positive correlation direction. It was found that consistent self-concept was significantly related to future orientation [32]. Furthermore, the study was conducted on 12 deaf subjects aged 17–21 years [27]. A significant correlation was detected with  $r = 0.84$  and Cronbach's alpha = 0.005, meaning the more positive self-concept becomes, the better one's future orientation. In this case, particularly concerning the education sector, once individuals can perform self-evaluation very well, a positive self-concept is formed. Therefore, a better ability to determine goals and future plans is possessed.

### 3 Research Methods

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were selected using the convenience sampling method. Furthermore, they were 102 adolescents aged 12–21 years old with divorced parents.

#### 3.2 Variable Construct Measurement

- Future orientation was measured using the Future Orientation Scale developed by Steinberg et al. [1]. It consists of 3 aspects, namely Planning Ahead, Time Perspective, and Anticipation of Future Consequences with a reliability value of 0.828. The score was measured using an attitude scale, namely very appropriate and appropriate. The higher the score obtained, the better or stronger the future orientation.
- Self-concept was measured using The Brief Scale of Five-Factor Self-concept Questionnaire (AF5) developed by Garcia-Grau et al. [2]. This consists of five aspects, namely academic or work, social, emotional, family self-concept, and physical self-concept with a reliability value of 0.892. The score was measured using an attitude scale ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to 5 = strongly agree. The higher the score obtained, the higher or positive self-concept becomes.

#### 3.3 Design

This non-experimental study employed a quantitative approach to the correlation method. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire scale distributed online through a google form.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

Correlational studies with correlational techniques were applied for the analysis of data which were processed using the Statistical Program for Science (SPSS) version 25 software (Table 1).

## 4 Results

#### 4.1 Demographics

#### 4.2 Normality Assumption Test

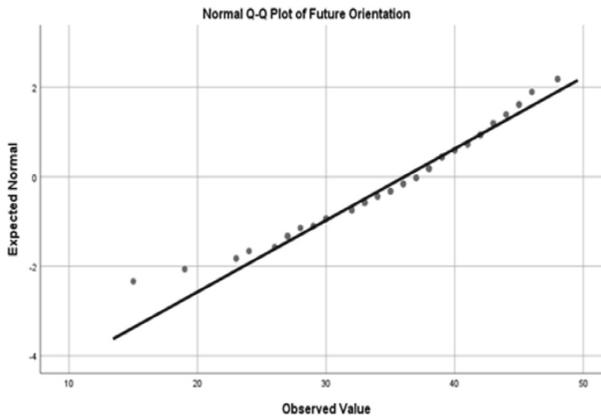
Based on the picture, the distribution of future orientation data and self-concept moves around the normal line, hence it can be concluded that both data are normally distributed (Fig. 1).

#### 4.3 Linearity Assumption Test

Table 2 shows that the two variables have a significance value of  $p = 0.023$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This implies the relationship between future orientation and self-concept variables is linear (Fig. 2).

**Table 1.** Demographic Data

Demographic Aspect	Category	<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Male	35	34.3%
	Female	67	65.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	12 – 14 years old	27	26.5%
	15 – 17 years old	31	30.4%
	18 – 21 years old	44	43.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>
Parent's Divorce Period	-(answered do not know)	17	16.7%
	≤ 5 years	32	31.4%
	6 – 10 years	23	22.5%
	≥ 11 years	30	29.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Fig. 1.** Future orientation normality test

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Test

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient  $r = 0.227$  and the significance value of  $p = 0.011$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these values, there is a positive correlation between self-concept and future orientation. The value of the coefficient of determination  $r^2 = 0.052$ , meaning self-concept provides an effective contribution to future orientation by 5%.

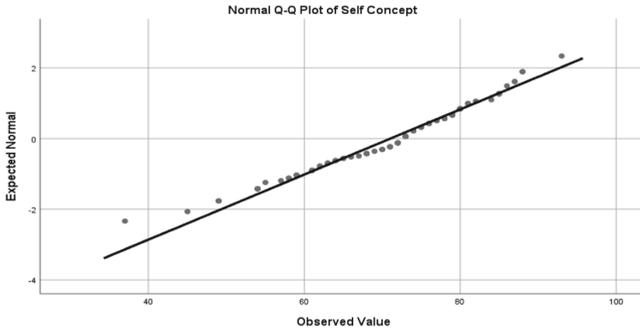


Fig. 2. Self-concept normality test

Table 2. Linearity Test Results

Variable	Linearity	F	Sig.	Description
Future orientation * Self-concept	<i>Linearity</i>	5.454	0.023	Linear
	<i>Deviation of Linearity</i>	1.001	0.486	There is no deviation from the linear line

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	r	Sig.	r <sup>2</sup>	Description
Future orientation * Self-concept	0.227	0.011	0.052	Significant

### 4.5 Additional Analysis Test

The aspects listed in Table 4 are considered to be correlated once they have a significance value of  $p < 0.05$ . Additionally, the aspects significantly correlated are marked with \*.

The female subjects have  $p$ -values  $< 0.05$ , hence future orientation is significantly correlated with self-concept in female subjects but not in males (Table 5).

The significance coefficient value obtained was  $p = 0.048$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This signifies there is a difference in the level of future orientation between the two subject genders where females have a higher level of orientation (Table 6).

The significance value of  $p = 0.013$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) was obtained in subjects aged 12–14 years, implying that self-concept has a relationship with future orientation in these subjects, but not in the age category of 15–17 years and 18–21 years (Table 7).

Based on the significance coefficient value of  $p$  which was 0.791 ( $p > 0.05$ ), there is no significant difference in the level of future orientation between the age groups (Table 8).

Subjects with parental divorce periods of 5, 6 – 10, and 11 years have a significance of  $p = 0.186, 0.108, \text{ and } 0.073$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded

**Table 4.** Intercorrelation Test

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Future Orientation	1	.831*	.802*	.767*	.227*	.022	.009	.009	.368*	.248*
Planning Ahead	.831*	1	.525*	.479*	.215*	.193	.073	.073	.259*	.267*
Time Perspective	.802*	.525*	1	.377*	.142	.188	.017	-.091	.279*	.128
Anticipation of Future Consequences	.767*	.479*	.277*	1	.191	.039	.028	.045	.347*	.206*
Sel-Concept	.227*	.215*	.142	.191	1	.699*	.756*	.704*	.753*	.798*
Academic/Work Sel-Concept	.176	.193	.188	0.39	.699*	1	.389*	.235*	.554*	.506*
Social Self-Concept	.022	.009	.017	0.28	.756*	.398*	1	.519*	.365*	.517*
Emotional Self-Concept	.009	.073	-.091	.045	.704*	.235*	.519*	1	.340*	.499*
Family Self-Concept	.368*	.259*	.279*	.347*	.753*	.554*	.365*	.340*	1	.473*
Physical Self-Concept	.248*	.267*	.128	.206*	.798*	.506*	.517*	.499*	.473*	1

**Table 5.** Correlation Test Based On Gender

Category	r	Sig.	r <sup>2</sup>	Description
Male	0.057	0.372	0.003	Insignificant
Female	0.385	0.001	0.148	Significant

**Table 6.** Difference Test Based On Gender

Category	Future Orientation		Description
	Mean	Sig.	
Male	34.40	0.048	There is a difference
Female	36.97		

that future orientation has no relationship with self-concept in the three categories of subjects based on these periods (Table 9).

**Table 7.** Correlation Test Based on Age

Category	r	Sig.	r <sup>2</sup>	Description
12 – 14 years	0.429	0.013	0.184	Significant
15 – 17 years	0.266	0.074	0.071	Insignificant
18 – 21 years	0.087	0.287	0.008	Insignificant

**Table 8.** Difference Test Based On Age

Category	Future Orientation		Description
	Mean	Sig.	
12 – 14 years	35.59	0.791	No difference
15 – 17 years	35.84		
18 – 21 years	36.57		

**Table 9.** Correlation Test Based On Parents’ Divorce Period

Category	r	Sig.	r <sup>2</sup>	Description
≤ 5 years	0.163	0.186	0.027	Insignificant
6 – 10 years	0.268	0.108	0.072	Insignificant
≥ 11 years	0.273	0.073	0.074	Insignificant

**Table 10.** Difference Test Based on Parents’ Divorce Period

Category	Orientasi Masa Depan		Description
	Mean	Sig.	
≤ 5 years	36.53	0.381	No difference
6 – 10 years	37.09		
≥ 11 years	36.17		

The significance value of p obtained was 0.381 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating there is no difference in the level of future orientation in the three subject categories based on the parental divorce period (Table 10).

## 5 Discussion

This study aims to determine whether there is a positive relationship between future orientation and self-concept in 102 adolescent subjects with divorced parents. Based on the analysis results of the hypothesis test conducted using the Pearson correlation technique, a significance value of  $p = 0.011$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) was obtained with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.227$ . Referring to the coefficient of determination, the effective contribution provided by the self-concept to future orientation is 5.2%. Although not too large, this value indicates the relationship between future orientation and self-concept is positive. Hence, the higher the self-concept, the greater the subjects' future orientation.

The results prove that a significant positive correlation exists between future orientation and the self-concept of adolescents with divorced parents [32]. Adolescents with a positive and consistent self-concept tend to have a positive perspective of the future. This is in line with the study [27] which stated adolescents with a positive self-assessment will more easily carry out self-reflection for the future. Furthermore, self-concept, specifically in academics, predicts the problems faced in one's future orientation [33]. An experimental study found that self-concept training can increase an individual's ability to be future-oriented [36].

Adolescents with divorced parents who were the subjects certainly had their dynamics. Self and mental shocks because of parents' divorce tend to affect adolescents' judgments and hopes for the future. Those capable of maintaining a positive personal perspective will slowly be motivated to have a better life in the future, and vice versa [37].

This study also included several additional analyses in the form of correlation and difference tests of variables based on gender, age, and parents' divorce period. Concerning the correlation test between variables based on gender, future orientation does not correlate with self-concept in male subjects but females. Furthermore, the difference test indicated a difference in the level of future orientation in both male and female subjects. The female subjects obtain a higher mean than their counterparts. This is in line with a previous study that stated females have a higher future orientation score than males [1]. Besides future orientation, females possess a more consistent self-concept [38].

Furthermore, the correlation test results for future orientation and self-concept based on age are described as follows. A significant correlation was detected in subjects aged 12–14 years with a coefficient of  $r = 0.429$ . Meanwhile, in the other two age groups, i.e. 15–17 years and 18–21 years, no correlation was found between both variables. This refers to the discovery that states one aspect of self-concept, namely freedom from anxiety, will decrease with increasing age in adolescence [39], meaning one of its sides or parts can continue to decline over time. Therefore, when associated with the results, the influence provided by self-concept on future orientation tends to decrease in the larger age group.

The test conducted based on age produced a significance value of  $p = 0.791$ , hence no difference exists in the level of future orientation based on age. This result is in line with the studies that stated younger and older adolescent subjects have nonsignificantly different levels of future orientation [33, 38].

The additional analysis also found no correlation between future orientation and self-concept in subjects based on the parents' divorce period. This is different from the

result [40] which stated parents' divorce, particularly in the early 18 years of a person's life, harms the formation of self-concept. Hence, it also has a long-term impact on the future image and hope. This difference in results can be explained through a study [41] that stated social support and parent-child relationships are included in the factors affecting the condition of adolescents after a divorce occurs. In line with the previous explanation, namely, social support and parent-child relationships are factors affecting a future orientation, it can be interpreted that other factors besides self-concept are related to future orientation in adolescents, specifically with divorced parents.

Furthermore, the test conducted based on parents' divorce period shows no difference in future orientation levels in the three divorce groups with a  $p\text{-value} = 0.381$ . Few studies explicitly explain the impact of divorce on children, including its specific effect on future orientation [42]. Also, a particular study [43] only explained that divorce has an impact all through an individual's lifetime without further explaining the changes in effects caused by the divorce period. This gap can be an interesting question and problems to be further explored.

Overall, this study discusses the relationship between future orientation and self-concept in adolescents who have divorced parents and their relationship with demographic factors and other additional factors. The results can be used as a basis for determining things requiring extra attention hence they tend to increase future orientation in adolescents with divorced parents.

This study has several limitations that can be considered as well as materials for further investigations on future orientation. The limitations include the difficulty of obtaining literature about future orientation, particularly on adolescents with divorced parents, hence the explanation of the topic according to the subjects' characteristics is still not deep. Moreover, the scale modification carried out to adjust the filling of the online questionnaire made allows the responses and meanings provided by the participants to be different while using the original scale format. Data collection through an online questionnaire also causes difficulty in supervising the filling process in terms of environmental conditions to the subjects' seriousness.

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