



The Effect of Parental Divorce on Children's Mental Health

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Abstract: Divorce is a condition where the relationship between husband and wife ends, which can be caused by various factors, one of which is poor communication. Divorce not only affects the couple but also has a negative impact on the mental health of children in the family. This study aims to understand the effects of divorce on children's mental health using a literature review method. Data were obtained through the analysis of various sources such as books, journals, and relevant research reports. The results of the study indicate that divorce can cause children to experience stress, trauma, feelings of loneliness, withdrawal, and concentration difficulties in learning. Furthermore, children from divorced families tend to have lower academic performance and struggle to build social relationships. In conclusion, parental divorce has a significant impact on children's mental health, which can affect their emotional and social development in the future. Therefore, it is crucial for parents and relevant parties to provide psychological support to help children cope with this situation more effectively.

Keywords: Children; Divorce; Family support; Mental health; Psychological impact

Introduction

Mental health is a condition that reflects a person's emotional, psychological, and social balance, which allows them to deal with life's stresses, build healthy relationships, and make good decisions (Çaksen, 2021; Cao et al., 2022; Pang et al., 2024). When a person has good mental health, they can feel a sense of inner peace, have a positive outlook, and be able to live their daily lives well (Ariani, 2019; Casas-Muñoz et al., 2024). Conversely, mental health disorders can lead to unstable emotions, excessive anger, or even physical disorders with no clear cause. Maintaining mental health is essential at all stages of life, from childhood to adulthood (Pellón et al., 2024; Sukmawati & Oktora, 2021). In this case, the role of parents is crucial, as the family environment is the initial foundation that shapes a child's mental state. If parents do not provide enough attention, or there is conflict in the household, such as divorce, children are often the main victims (Dadi et al., 2023; Eldasari & Diana, 2024; Niu et al., 2023).

Children who face parental divorce are at risk of experiencing a variety of problems, ranging from difficulty controlling emotions, excessive fear, to

learning difficulties and concentration disorders. This can impact their academic performance and chances of a bright future (Indriani et al., 2018). Divorce, as a form of domestic instability, is often chosen as a last resort to resolve a couple's conflict. However, divorce also has a huge impact on children's mental health (Tullius et al., 2022).

Children from divorced families tend to lose emotional support from one parent, which often triggers feelings of insecurity, isolation, and excessive stress. In fact, in the long run, this condition can lead to deviant behaviors such as juvenile delinquency, school dropout, or the inability to build healthy interpersonal relationships in the future (Asanjarani et al., 2022; Øverup et al., 2025). This problem is exacerbated by social factors, such as the stigma attached to children from divorced families. A negative social environment can exacerbate a child's feelings of low self-esteem, making it even more difficult for them to move on from the trauma they have experienced (Enami et al., 2024; Riaka Ayu Lestari et al., 2023). Therefore, support from parents who remain emotionally present and guidance from professionals, such as psychologists, are crucial to help these children deal with the impact of divorce (Mahendra et al., 2022; Mone, 2019a). This paper focuses

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on how parental divorce affects children's mental health, hoping to provide a better understanding of the important role of family and society in providing support for children from divorced families. With the right steps, such as good communication and an empathetic approach, it is hoped that the adverse effects of divorce can be minimized, and children can grow up mentally healthy and optimistic for their future.

Method

This research uses the literature study method by studying various reliable sources, such as journals, academic articles, books, and other relevant documents. This method aims to collect important information related to the impact of parental divorce on children's mental health. Analysis was conducted by comparing and evaluating the results of various previous studies to gain a deeper understanding. By using this method, researchers can find relevant patterns, themes and recommendations without having to collect data directly. The results of this literature study provide a comprehensive, theory-based overview of the effects of divorce on children, while offering measures to address the negative impacts (Dzando et al., 2025; Gharaibeh et al., 2023).

Result and Discussion

Factors Causing Parental Divorce

Divorce marks the end of the marriage bond, where a married couple decides to end their relationship. In Islam, a divorce is considered valid after the husband pronounces the talak, but in order to be legally recognized in Indonesia, the divorce must be legalized through a religious court (Miralles et al., 2023a; Sary, 2022). There are many reasons underlying divorce, such as infidelity, lack of responsibility, to differences in education, culture, and life expectancy. The failure of either party to fulfill their religious obligations is also often a contributing factor. While marriage should ideally last a lifetime, the reality is that various factors often make relationships untenable (Amalia et al., 2018; Hjern et al., 2023).

Economic Factors

As many as 45% of respondents mentioned that economic problems were the main cause of divorce. This difficulty usually arises from the husband's irregular income or insufficient household needs, so that the family finances become unstable (Harwansyah et al., 2023; Smock et al., 2024). Failure to meet basic family needs often triggers tension. Other contributing factors include low morality, inadequate income and lack of human resource skills. The inability to manage finances

also contributes to marital unhappiness (Mone, 2019b; Rosado et al., 2024).

Poor Communication Factors

Ideal communication plays an important role in maintaining marital harmony. Positive communication, or what is called associative communication, helps to create good cooperation between spouses. However, poor communication is often a source of problems, such as one party feeling unappreciated or unable to convey their feelings. Lack of understanding and dialog regarding the purpose of marriage often triggers more serious conflicts and leads to disharmony in the family (Hafiza & Mawarपुरy, 2018a; Song et al., 2023).

Presence of a Third Person

Infidelity is one of the main causes of divorce, with various forms ranging from physical relationships to emotional affairs through online communication. When one partner feels dissatisfied or experiences disharmony in the marriage, they may seek comfort and emotional support elsewhere. This act of betrayal can break trust and create emotional distance, making it difficult for the couple to maintain a healthy relationship. As infidelity continues, it often leads to further deterioration of the household dynamic. Feelings of resentment, anger, and disappointment may arise, causing frequent conflicts and a lack of communication between partners. In many cases, unresolved infidelity results in the breakdown of the marriage, as rebuilding trust becomes a challenging and emotionally draining process. Consequently, divorce is often seen as the final resolution when reconciliation is no longer possible (Liu et al., 2023; Miralles et al., 2023b; O'Hara et al., 2023).

The Impact of Parental Divorce on Children

Divorce has a significant impact on children's lives, including stress, fear, sadness, confusion, and difficulty expressing feelings (Mikrani & Sari, 2024). Children who experience parental divorce often feel lost and lack confidence, both at home and at school. This negative impact is most pronounced in children aged 6 to 12, where their emotional state is heavily influenced by the family situation. Therefore, parents need to carefully consider the impact of divorce on children before making a decision (Hafiza & Mawarपुरy, 2018b).

How to Overcome the Impact of Divorce

To reduce the negative impact of divorce on children, several steps are needed, such as establishing good communication between parents and children, and providing attention and love from both sides of the family. Support from teachers at school also helps children to stay strong and brave in their family situation (Ciacci, 2023). Remedial measures can include

actions such as providing rewards, counseling assistance, and creating a supportive learning environment. Despite living in a separated family, children still have the spirit to learn and excel at school (Hasanah, 2020; Huang & Ma, 2024; Matsukura et al., 2023a).

The Meaning of Happiness for Children from Broken Home Families

Children from broken home families view happiness as something that can be achieved through a life full of meaning, purpose, and positive relationships. They feel that a meaningful life is not only self-focused, but also involves the interests of others. With active involvement and good relationships with their surroundings, these children are able to lead more meaningful lives despite coming from disadvantaged family backgrounds (Faizah, 2022; Garriga & Pennoni, 2022; Matsukura et al., 2023b).

Conclusion

Parental divorce has a significant impact on children's mental health, such as depression, trauma, acute sadness, a sense of worthlessness, and a tendency to shut down. Many parents do not fully understand or involve children in the divorce decision-making process, so children often feel unappreciated and unimportant. Depression is one of the most common impacts experienced by children, characterized by prolonged negative thinking, difficulty building social interactions, and pessimism about the future. As most children do not dare to express their feelings, these psychological impacts often go undetected by parents, making it difficult to heal. Preventive measures such as marriage counseling or mediation before deciding to divorce are essential to minimize these impacts. If divorce remains unavoidable, the role of parents in establishing good communication with children and providing consistent attention is crucial. In addition, support from the social environment, such as friends, community and school, also plays an important role in helping children adapt. Teachers or school counselors can provide significant additional assistance. Education for parents on how to understand their children's emotional needs and engage them in constructive discussions about divorce is another important step. Parents need to learn effective communication skills to help children feel valued and supported. In addition, long-term support in the form of monitoring the child's mental state and engaging in positive activities can help the child cope better with the impact of divorce. In conclusion, with a combination of preventive approaches, strong emotional support from the family, and involvement of the social environment, the negative impact of divorce on children can be minimized. These measures give children the

opportunity to grow up with more stable mental health and optimism for their future.

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Conceptualization, AKPT and YA; methodology, GIPN; resources, GIPN and AKPT; data curation, YA; writing—original draft preparation, YA; writing—review and editing, GIPN; visualization, AKPT; supervision, AKPT.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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