



Children's Mental Health and the Psychological Impact of Broken Home

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Abstract

Broken home or family division has a negative impact on family members, especially children. This study aims to understand the psychological impact of broken home on adolescent children's mental health. The research used qualitative case study method with in-depth interview as data collection method. The subject was a 17-year-old teenage girl from a broken home family. The results showed a change in the subject's behavior after her parents separated. The subject, who was initially closed, is now more open to one of his parents, allegedly because he felt free from pressure before his parents separated. This is in accordance with the theory of behaviorism, where behavior is influenced by stimulus and response. The broken home stimulus gave rise to a response in the form of behavioral changes in the subject. The psychological impact experienced by the subject also goes through five stages, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Currently the subject has reached the acceptance stage, where the subject has been able to accept the reality that his parents are broken home. In conclusion, there were changes in the subject's behavior due to a broken home, but in the end the subject was able to reach the stage of acceptance of his family's condition, although it took a long process to achieve this. It is hoped that this research can enrich the understanding of the psychological impact of broken homes on adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the divorce rate increased in 2021, causing an increase in the number of children with mental disorders (Rahmania & Yuniar, 2022). Based on data obtained from the Masamba Religious Court (PA), in 2020 there were 531 divorce cases, while in 2021 there were 539 cases. This means that there was an increase of eight divorce cases in North Luwu. The Deputy Legal Clerk of the North Luwu Public Court, Wahyudin Wahid, said that the increasing divorce rate in North Luwu was dominated by economic factors, infidelity, and also Domestic Violence (KDRT).

Families who experience a broken home will have a bad impact on all family members (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Families that experience a broken home such as divorce, death of a spouse or living in a family that is not harmonious all affect family interactions and also negatively impact adolescent psychology so that it causes juvenile delinquency (Sylvia et al., 2019). A broken home is a family where parents are separated or divorced, which results in a lack of attention and affection for children so that it can lead to psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Dewi, 2016).

The impacts that occur on children after a broken home include: First, indirect divorce will have a negative psychological impact on the family. Which directly children will feel a deep sense of loss because the figure of their parents is no longer complete, accompanied by daily activities or the habit of always accompanying and having fun with their parents (Rinaldi & Yuniasanti, 2020). After a broken home, children will automatically change their attitudes, such as being alone, always feeling inferior, and having difficulty integrating with the environment. In addition, the psychological impact on children from broken home families is that they develop unhealthy, emotional, and irresponsible personalities (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Second, the influence of education. Families with broken homes greatly affect the mood of their victims, so that the education of children from broken homes is not good and many children are unable to complete their education according to the set targets (Danilwan et al., 2020).

Another impact of a broken home will also cause trauma for children because parents provide abusive parenting, thereby increasing children's shame towards their environment and social life (Suprpty et al., 2021). When a child has fallen into a state of injury but previously felt happy and always received warmth from his parents, this causes the child to be in great pain because it is difficult to accept circumstances that are contrary to his previous ones. This causes psychological trauma that makes it difficult for them to forget it, causing very serious trauma.

In fact, a broken family doesn't always have a negative impact on the child, it can also have a positive impact. However, most children's health conditions are said to be susceptible to negative things such as anger, difficulties in social communication and lack of zest for life (Alfauzi et al., 2021). In terms of psychology or psychiatric terms Theoretically, anyone who has experienced a broken home will also result in a broken heart. A person's heart is always filled with pain, disappointment, despair and the thought that living for oneself is meaningless. On this basis, a person can fall into a crisis of love and fall into sexual alienation (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021).

The family certainly has a very important influence on the growth and development of children, because it is the first group in human life (Kartono, 1992). Of course, the victims of a broken home family are children. (Astuti & Anganthi, 2016) stated that this situation certainly has a great impact on children's growth and development, character, and personality formation.

Adolescents who experience a dominant broken home problem experience dissatisfaction and lack of control over themselves (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). Aziz (2015) stated that adolescents who experience broken homes often feel psychological disorders for themselves, such as depression which is the cause of children's bad behavior. Widodo et al. (2023) states that when adolescents enter the stage of exploration of their personal identity and problems, the unpleasant reality is that they are faced with a situation where their parents have to divorce. For teenagers, parental divorce is not an easy thing and requires steps or processes to help teenagers achieve a divorce decision by both parents (Handayani et al., 2020).

Behavioral theory or behaviorism focuses on the study of responses to observable behaviors as well as environmental determinants. Skinner believed that neither conscious nor unconscious minds are necessary to explain behavior. People who are experts in this theory argue that development occurs by learning and depending on experience from the environment, therefore by rearranging experience, developmental changes can occur. According to behavioral experts, shy behavior can turn into openness, aggressive behavior can turn into an obedient attitude, and unenthusiastic and unpleasant behavior can turn into enthusiastic and fun behavior (Santrock, 2003).

In this broken home problem, the child's behavior depends on the experiences that exist around him. The experiences discussed here are experiences that come from informants who experienced broken home families. Thus, the purpose of writing this article is to describe the psychological impact on the mental health of children who are victims of broken homes.

METHOD

The research method used by the author to conduct this research is qualitative research using the case study method. Qualitative research methods are studies that aim to understand a phenomenon faced by the research subject, such as motivation, perception, action, behavior, and others, through the description of word forms and language in a certain context and using different scientific methods (Meleong, 2005). The case study method is one of the qualitative research strategies (Gunawan et al., 2019).

Mulyana (2003) argues that qualitative research with case study methods is considered appropriate to be applied to this research. This case study method collects data through observation, document review, surveys (results), interviews, and other data that can describe a case in detail. The use of this case study method can be used to answer research questions in relation to "why and how" (Yin et al., 2019). Creswell revealed that there are a number of "obstacles" in developing qualitative case studies: among other things, researchers must be able to identify suitable cases; determine whether to study a single case or even several cases; and determine the boundaries of the case. Limitations can be seen in the passage of time, events, and processes.

The data collection method used is an interview which is also an interview method that is a good method used in assessing individuals, without age restrictions and flexible methods (Hadi, 2004). In this interview method, it is supplemented with a tool in the form of a tape recorder (voice recorder). The location of the research is in Masamba District, North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi. The time of this study is on Monday 27 November 2023. The subject of this study was a 15-year-old child who was a victim of a broken home family. This research was carried out by directly visiting the home of the victim of a broken home in Masamba. By asking the victim directly, here the researcher obtained data related to the impact he felt on the family who broke home.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on information obtained from interviews and observations, facts were obtained about the psychological impact on the mental health of adolescents whose parents were broken home or separated. This is based on the answers and responses of the speakers. There were approximately 13 questions asked during the interview, starting from questions about identity, ranging from name, education, to age. The level of education is important because the available information sources need to be classified based on their categories. Age is also important, as age affects his behavior and reaction to the situation at hand. This

is due to birth, infancy, early, middle and late childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle and late childhood. In addition to these three questions, there are still various other questions in the form of open-ended questions where respondents explain what they think and feel. All of these questions lead to the current situation of the child whose family is broken home.

Based on the results of the interview, the child was a teenager. Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Many changes occurred during this period, ranging from hormonal, psychological, physical, and social changes. This can happen quickly, and sometimes we don't even realize it. Physical changes that occur in the form of increased visibility are signs of secondary sexual development, behavioral changes, and social interaction with the environment. Adolescents also experience various psychosocial changes, ranging from behavior, their relationship with the environment, to feelings of attraction to the opposite sex. If parents are unable to understand what situation is happening and how to respond to it, then the changes that occur can complicate the relationship between parents and their adolescents (Batubara, 2016). This is especially the case because his parents have a broken home, which can complicate the current situation. Children who are used to living with their biological parents may lose them when their parents divorce. However, children will not experience the experience if they do not understand the impact of their parents' divorce, and parents often hide what happened with the divorce. The divorce of his parents at a critical age of 15 to 19 years can affect his psychiatry. Because, at this stage, it is undeniable that it will have an impact on the teenager. In this case it depends on what the parents are doing and how they need to give understanding and attention to the child gradually. Some cases show that a messy family situation can have a very negative impact on a child's psyche. In fact, families with broken home environments have a negative impact on children's psychological well-being (Febriansyah & Henndy Ginting, 2020).

The teenager currently lives with his father for various reasons. One of the considerations is that fathers care more about their children and need more attention from them. Teenagers choose to live with their fathers over their mothers because it also concerns comfort and the way fathers build relationships with their children. Based on the answers given, the mother was actually concerned and the father was very concerned about the teenager. This can be explained using attachment theory. Attachment theory is defined as an emotional relationship between one person and another that has a special meaning. In this case, the relationship is usually only limited to the mother or the child's caregiver. The relationships built are reciprocal and long-term, and provide a sense of security even if we don't meet our children. There are several types of attachment models, one of which is secure attachment. This theory arises from the interaction between parents and children. Children trust their parents as caregivers who are always there for them, affectionate when looking for food, and always helpful and supportive in dangerous situations.

The answer is known based on one of the question points asked. It is important to ask this question because it definitely affects the mental health and behavior of adolescents. When teens discuss mental health and behavioral changes due to a broken home, they experience a variety of behavioral changes compared to before. The interviewee explained that in the past they used to lock themselves in their rooms if they had problems, but after their parents divorced, they started to be more open to one of their parents and there were some behavioral changes. The problem behind him doing this is because at first, before the family split, he had a problem with one of his parents, which caused him to lock himself in a room. Based on the answers given, the important thing is that there is a change in behavior before and after parents disturb the house. This phenomenon is closely related to the theory

of behaviorism. This theory reveals that this theory involves behavioral changes due to the interaction between stimuli and responses (Saunders et al., 2009). If this stimulus occurs due to a Broken Home, it causes a reaction in the child. In other words, the environment plays a role in changing adolescent behavior. In this case, the environment is the closest people to the child, for example parents whose families are cracked. In addition to parents, the environment such as family, friends, and society can also motivate adolescents to change their behavior. This behavioral theory, based on Skinner's view, is a stimulus-response correlation shown by individuals based on their interactions with the environment. This theory argues that a person's behavior is the result of an interaction between stimulus and response. The characteristic of this behavior theory is the change in behavior that a person shows after experiencing past events. Learning is when a person reacts to an event, turns it into a learning experience, and generates the appropriate response at the next moment to escape from the previously perceived influence (Ariesta & Latifah, 2017).

Serra Cantallops & Salvi (2014) states that individuals go through several stages before reaching the acceptance stage. So there are stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The first of these five stages is denial, which at this stage is usually difficult to believe what is happening. This period of rejection is usually only temporary for the individual, but is a kind of defense mechanism that arises from distrust of the existing reality. In the case of a child whose family is broken home, the affected child usually finds it difficult to accept the fact that his or her parents are divorced. The second is anger or anger. At this stage, the person understands that what happened will not happen again and feelings of sadness and anger are inevitable. Often, the person is unable to accept reality and feels that they need someone to blame, so even small things become an outlet for anger over their feelings of sadness. If a teenager is still at this stage in the case of a broken home family, he or she is likely to be angry at others because of his parents' circumstances. Third, there is bargaining or bargaining. This stage describes the hope that the situation that arises can change to the previous state. The person may also negotiate the pain they feel or recall the past to cope with the sad emotions they are feeling. Where if they are again associated with the teenager, at this stage they will bargain for their condition. The fourth is depression or depression. The person becomes more focused on the reality of the moment, and it becomes difficult to find a way out of all the games that come to mind. This causes feelings of sadness and a tendency to withdraw from the environment. Likewise, if it is associated with a broken home, especially seeing the parents of friends who are still together, this situation makes it depressed and sad and even has an impact on the daily lives of the people around. The last is acceptance. According to Agusfianto et al. (2022), acceptance does not mean that a person feels satisfied with the reality that has happened, but rather accepts the circumstances in which one has to live with the reality. When dealing with teenagers who have problems in a broken home, we often find that those who have reached this stage have accepted the fact that their parents are divorced and are able to choose and continue the life they have lived.

Based on the interview answers, the teenager understands why his parents have to live separately and is not selfish in asserting his wishes. With the accumulation of thoughts and experiences, adolescents reach a stage where they accept or accept the situation as it is. Currently, the teenager accepts his parents' broken home and looks at him sincerely. Acceptance is the basis for accepting the reality that everyone experiences and all their experiences, both bad and good. According to Ming-Yen Teoh et al. (2013), acceptance is characterized by positive behavior, recognition or appreciation of the values that a person has, but it also includes recognition of his own actions. Widodo & Riandi (2013) also states

that acceptance occurs when a person is able to face reality, rather than giving up too quickly or immediately thinking there is no hope. He doesn't feel denial or blame the situation, anger or depression. This is the highest point of response when experiencing a problem. To get to this point is not easy and requires extra effort. This can be seen from the four stages that adolescents go through, starting with denial and ending with acceptance. This gradual change is an example of behavioral change from Behaviorist Theory. Where the response to the stimulus that teenagers get with broken home children is that it has reached the acceptance stage. Moreover, if we look at the characteristics of this theory, we find that when adolescents go through various stages and reach the final stage, they experience a period of behavioral change that is seen in the moment in the past, that is, when they experienced separation.

CONCLUSION

Broken home is one of the problems that can occur in a family. The results of the study showed that the subjects were in the adolescent phase. Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Therefore, there will be a change in existing behavior, as a result of the transitional state. The changes that occur are directed to something good or bad, especially with the condition that the parents have broken home so that it can complicate the existing atmosphere. At the age of 17, he is still in a relatively labile state, so his position as an Adolescents also affects this. In this period, it is possible for various behavioral changes to occur due to labile conditions due to the transition. The stimulus is in the form of the condition of his parents who are broken home and also the influence of the surrounding environment. This results in the emergence of various responses that when associated with the theory of Loss or Grief can be divided into five stages, namely, the stages of rejection, anger, negotiation, depression, and acceptance. Currently, based on the results of the interview, the adolescent is already in the stage of acceptance or acceptance. This is because the teenager has reconciled and accepted the situation that occurred and also the teenager is not selfish in imposing his will. This condition is a great phenomenon of a teenage girl in facing the moment of her parents who are broken home. There are people who have not reached that stage and are still in the four previous stages. Efforts to reach this stage can also be further explored so that we can get a clear picture of the case study of how the adolescent can reach that stage. In addition, the research can also be developed more specifically, in order to get a clear picture of how attitudes change before and after a broken home that may still be hidden. This is so that we can peel it off with the right theory so that it can be solved correctly and can also be based on existing theories.

Suggestion

Suggestions for further research. The expansion of the research sample is not only limited to one person, so that a more comprehensive picture can be obtained. It is recommended to involve more adolescent participants from broken home families. Conduct in-depth interviews not only with broken home children, but also with parents and other nearby neighborhoods. This can provide additional information regarding the factors that affect the child in reaching the acceptance stage. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) in order to complement each other's weaknesses and strengths. For example, by conducting a psychological scale questionnaire as supporting data. Conducting longitudinal studies to see the development of broken home children over time, not just at one point in time. This can enrich the understanding of the process that broken home children go through. Exploring coping strategies carried out by

broken home teenagers in dealing with various stages after their parents divorced. This information can be useful for counselors or psychologists in providing interventions.

These suggestions are expected to strengthen the results of further research on the same topic, so that our understanding of the psychological impact of broken homes is deepened.

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