

# Differences Between Attitudes Towards Marriage Among Young Adults With Divorced and Non-Divorced Parents

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## ABSTRACT

Parental divorce has a various impact for each individuals, especially in young adulthood. Young adults with divorced parents are reported to be having an intimacy and relationship problems, one of them is their attitudes toward marriage. This study is aimed to compare attitudes toward marriage among young adults with divorced and non-divorced parents. This study uses the attitudes toward marriage scale which was arranged by Widodo (2010) based on the tripartite model of attitude by Rosenberg and Hovland. This study involves participant aged 20-30 years old. The total of participants in this study is 179 participants, with 79 participants has divorced parents and 100 participant has non-divorced parents. Mann Whitney U test showed  $U = 3073$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , which means there is a significant differences between attitudes toward marriage among young adult with divorced and non-divorced parents.

**Keywords:** attitudes toward marriage, young adult, divorced parents, non-divorced parents.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, divorce cases in Indonesia is increasing every year [1]. Divorce does not only affect the couples, but also affects the children [2]. A child who has lived in an intact family must adjust himself to the new family construct after his parents' divorce takes place. Divorce has its biggest impact on young adult children [3]. Young adults will start to have important experiences where decisions taken will affect their future.

Parent's decision to maintain or not maintain their marriage forms an individual's attitudes toward personal relationship as an initial form of marriage in the future [4]. Young adult with divorced parents often have the belief that marriage will not last a lifetime and divorce can always be a way out of a bad marriage. This attitudes toward marriage, where there is a tendency to divorce than to maintain marriage has been a contributor to the increase of divorce rates. Attitudes toward marriage are defined as individual perceptions of marriage [5]. Positive attitudes toward marriage generally show a high preference for marriage and an unwillingness to divorce [5].

Various studies tend to show that young adults whose parents are divorced tend to have more negative attitudes toward marriage [6-8]. Meanwhile, positive attitudes toward marriage play an important role in preventing the rise of divorce and improving the quality of individual relationships. However, research by Branch-Harris and Cox [9] shows different results, where attitudes toward marriage between young adults whose parents divorced

and individuals whose parents did not divorce did not show significantly different scores. Related research still not widely found, especially in Indonesia. Most of the relationship research are conducted in US which have different culture compared with Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Participants

The study involves 179 participants obtained through online distributing questionnaires, consisting 79 participants with divorced parents and 100 participants with non-divorced parents. All participants have an age range of 20-30 years old, are not married, and are planning a wedding or are dating for at least one year.

### 2.2 Measurement

The attitudes toward marriage was measured using an attitudes toward marriage scale which was arranged based on three attitude components from Rosenberg and Hovland by student of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Tarumanagara, Widodo [11]. The scale consists of 37 statements that contain 26 positive items (e.g., "In my opinion, marriage is something beautiful and sacred") and 11 negative items (e.g., "Talking about marriage causes me to feel anxious or worried") which is measured using a likert scale. The scale consists of five levels, ranging from strongly agree (SS), agree (S), doubt (RR), disagree (TS), and strongly disagree (STS).

The attitudes toward marriage consists of three dimensions, namely affective, behavioral, and cognitive. The affective dimension consists of 13 items (e.g., "Talking about marriage makes me enthusiastic or excited about living life"). The behavioral dimension consists of eight items (e.g., "If I feel that I am ready to get married, I will not hesitate to get married."). The cognitive dimension consists of 16 items (e.g., "Getting married makes my life not lonely or alone anymore").

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Results

The study included 79 (44.1%) participants with divorced parents and 100 (55.9%) participants with non-divorced parents. 36 (20.1%) participants were male and 143 (79.9%) were female. Participants have a minimum age of 20 years and a maximum age of 30 years. Most participants in this study are aged 20 and 22 years old, with the total of 32 (17.9%) participants each. Meanwhile, the total age of the participants who were the least in this study were participants with age 29 and 30 years, namely as many as 3 (1.7%) participants each.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test in the group of participants with non-divorced parents showed  $p = 0.064 > 0.05$ , which means the data is normally distributed. While the normality test in the group of participants with divorced parents showed  $p = 0.042 < 0.05$ , which means the data are not normally distributed. The existence of not normally distributed data leads the analysis of data in non-parametric test.

**Table 1.** Normality Statistic

Parent's Marital Status	Kolmogrov-Smirnov	
	Sig.	Distribution
Non-divorced	0.064	Normal
Divorced	0.042	Not normal

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted to see differences in the total score of attitudes toward marriages between the two sample groups. The test results showed the value of  $U = 3073$  and  $p = 0.011 < 0.05$ . Therefore,  $H_0$  in this study was rejected, meaning that there was a significant differences between attitudes toward marriage of young adults with divorced and non-divorced parents. The mean rank of participants with non-divorced parents was 96.77, which is greater than 78.90 the mean rank of participants whose parents divorced. Attitudes toward marriages of participants (young adult) with non-divorced parents are significantly higher than attitudes toward marriages of participants with divorced parents

**Table 2.** Test Hypothesis

Parent's Marital Status	Ranks		Mann-Whitney U	
	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Non-divorced	100	96.77	3073	0.011
Divorced	79	78.90		

The Mann-Whitney test was then conducted to see differences in the scores of each dimension of attitudes toward marriage between the two sample groups. Results showed that significant differences only occur in the affective dimension based on the parent's marital status. The test showed the value of  $M = 102.42$  in participants who have parents not divorced and the value of  $M = 74.28$  in participants with divorced parents ( $U = 2708.5$  and  $p = 0,000 < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.** Mann-Whitney Test among Each Dimensions

Dimensions	Mean		Mann-Whitney U	
	Non-Divorced Parents	Divorced Parents	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.
Affective	102.42	74.28	2708.5	0.000
Behavioral	93.41	85.68	3609	0.320
Cognitive	96.35	81.97	3315.5	0.065

The Mann-Whitney test was also conducted to see differences in attitudes toward marriage score based on the participant's gender. The test results showed the mean rank of attitudes toward marriage in male participants was 94.89 and the mean rank in female participants was 88.77 with  $U = 2398$  and  $p$  value  $0.526 > 0.05$ . Means, there is no significant differences between attitudes toward marriage between female and male participants.

**Table 4.** Mann Whitney Test among Gender

Gender	Ranks		Mann-Whitney U	
	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Male	36	94.89	2398	0.526
Female	143	88.77		

#### 3.2 Discussion

Results showed a significant differences between attitudes toward marriage in young adult with divorced and non-divorced parents, where young adults with divorced parents had lower scores. This proves that the experience of parental divorce is one of the aspects that affect an individual's attitudes toward marriage. Children see the decision of parents to divorce as a model, so that it affects their views in relationship Rice in [10]. After young adults witnessed the relationship between their parents who got divorced during their childhood and finally began to experience a romantic relationship (dating), these young adults tend to start thinking and associating with their marriage later.

The intergenerational transmission of divorce theory by Amato also explains that attitudes toward marriage that is 'passed down' by divorced parents to their children [11]. Furthermore, Coleman and Ganong [12] used social learning theory to explain the influence of family structure and family integration on child's attitudes toward

marriage. Attention as the first process of social learning is the reason for individuals who adopt model's behavior. It can be said that children who have intact and especially harmonious families will adopt a model of a marriage relationship that is whole and harmonious in their cognitive processes and thus forms attitudes toward marriages that tend to be more positive.

Differences in attitudes toward marriage between young adults with divorced and non-divorced parents are tend to based on subjective adult feelings or emotions toward marriage. The analysis showed that there were mean scores which also differed in behavioral and cognitive dimensions, but were not significant. The affective dimension involved the feeling that an individual has about marriage. Parental divorced are often associated with children's emotional problems [13-14]. Affective dimension concerns emotional aspects that are usually rooted deeply as a component of attitude and most resistant to other influences that might change the attitudes [15]. This can be the reason why the differences are more significantly seen in the affective dimension.

On the other hand, the influence of eastern culture in Indonesia can also be the reason why differences occur most significantly on the affective dimension. People with strong eastern culture influence tend to be more sensitive to feelings or affections related matter. Furthermore as a collective society, divorce is considered as a negative concept and has no advantage at all [16]. Therefore individual perceptions, as related to cognitive dimension regarding the concept of divorce do not change.

The results of the analysis test showed there were no significant differences between attitudes toward marriage among male and female participants in general. These results are not in consistent with some of the results of the study which claimed to represent significant differences between attitudes toward marriage among male and female. Female has higher attitudes toward marriage than male. The change in gender ideology is one of the causes of this different results [5]. Ideology for each individual can be changed from traditional ideology. For example, women who previously had the ideology to get married and have children at a young age, began to change. Moreover, the existence of feminism also contributed to influencing female's attitudes toward marriage [12]. Feminism gives females a view of gender equality in marriage. Egalitarian women are stated to have lower intention to marry Goldscheider & Goldscheider [12]. On the other hand, this study has limitation related to an imbalance in the number of male and female participants, in which the study participants consisted of 143 women and 36 men that could affect the results.

## **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

The results of this study indicate that there are significant differences between attitudes toward the marriage among young adults with divorced and non-divorced parents. Attitudes toward marriage in the group of participants with

non-divorced parents are higher or can be said to be more positive than the attitudes toward marriage in the group of participants with divorced parents. However, significant differences in attitude variables toward marriage are proven to occur only in the affective dimension.

### **4.2 Suggestions**

#### **4.2.1 Theoretical Suggestions**

This research's limitations consist on the lack of available literature, especially on the attitudes toward marriage variable. Perhaps, there will be more extensive and in-depth studies on attitudes toward marriage, especially in Indonesia. It will certainly be helpful to the related parties, researchers, practitioners, and families to understand better the concepts and importance of attitudes toward marriage. Future studies can conduct research with more homogeneous participants in each group and can be done on a bigger number and more balanced participants. Attitudes toward marriage to individuals who have divorced parents are often associated with the conflict between the parents who also felt by the child, both before and after the divorce occurred. Future studies can add parental conflict as one of the variables associated with attitudes toward individual marriages. Further, future research can also be done with qualitative methods, to get a more in-depth picture of the participant's attitudes.

#### **4.2.2 Practical Suggestions**

Negative attitudes toward marriage have been recognized as one of the contributors that individuals can experience divorce in their life. So, it is important for parents to understand the parenting tips and styles related to divorce so that parents are able to avoid child's negative attitudes toward marriage. To develop the right parenting style, parents are advised to study the effects of parental divorce that related to child's attitudes toward relationships. By learning, parents are expected to improve their communication with children and prevent these negative effects. Perhaps, it will be able to help break the divorce cycle.

It is important for young adults, both those from intact and divorced families, to try to develop positive attitudes toward marriage by studying aspects that influence attitudes toward marriage. Specific advice that researchers can give to young adults who have divorced parents is to keep trying to look for the positive side of the experience and understand that each individual is different. So that young adults with divorced parents will no longer have the belief that their marriage will be the same as what was experienced by both parents. If young adults find it difficult to develop positive attitudes toward marriage, they should ask practitioners in related fields for help. In addition, by knowing the differences in attitudes toward marriage, researchers hope that practitioners in the related field are able to create an appropriate premarital guidance program for young adults in order to help young adults obtain information and develop more positive attitudes towards marriage.

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