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# The Relationship between Locus of Control and Resilience in Adolescents Whose Parents are Divorced

Feebe Felicia<sup>1</sup>, Monty P. Satiadarma<sup>2,\*</sup>, Untung Subroto<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bachelor of Psychology Study Program, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author. Email: montys@fpsi.untar.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

Locus of control is a subjective perception of who, or what controls events that occur in an individual's life. Each individual needs to instill confidence in the ability to control their own life, so that individuals are aware of their capacity to solve various life problems independently. In solving various problems, resilience is needed. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between locus of control and resilience in adolescents whose parents are divorced. This study involved 282 participants with an age range of 13 to 21 years and used quantitative methods. The results of this study showed  $r = 0.777$  and  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Based on these results, it can be concluded that there is a positive and strong relationship between locus of control and resilience in adolescents whose parents are divorced, which means that the locus of control possessed by adolescents can affect how adolescents deal with their parents' divorce.

**Keywords:** locus of control, resilience, adolescence, divorce

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the main and most important environment for the development and formation of a child's personality, because a child's first experiences are within the family [1]. Functional families can provide a sense of security and comfort for children. However, it is undeniable that problems within the family exist. These problems can affect the balance in the family and is dangerous for family life [2]. One of the effects of the disruption of family balance is the divorce of parents.

Until now, the divorce rate in Indonesia kept increasing every year. The Central Statistics Agency [3] shows that divorce in Indonesia in 2019 reached 438,013 cases, with the biggest cause of divorce being continuous disputes and quarrels, with a total of 231,872 cases. Economic factors rank second with a total of 120,732 cases. Meanwhile, other causes of divorce are husband / wife leaving with 60,505 cases, domestic violence 7,814 cases, and drunkenness 2,773 cases.

Divorce is the official dissolution of a marital relationship between a man and a woman [4]. Divorce is often considered as a way out to solve various problems in the household [5]. However, couples who choose to divorce, often do not realize that there are various negative impacts on the children [6]. Divorce can inflict a deep wound to the children, which may persist until adulthood [7].

Price and McKenry [8] argued that adolescent children tend to be exposed to a greater negative impact from the occurrence of parental divorce. One of which is lower life satisfaction and welfare [9]. The teenage stage is very sensitive and important stage, because they begin to experience various kinds of changes, both physically,

cognitively, socially, and emotionally [10]. These changes have been shown to have a strong correlation with pressure on adolescents [11]. Adolescents who are in a transitional stage, then, they are faced with a traumatic event such as parental divorce, it can emerge additional stress for adolescents. The pressure that builds up, and eventually it cannot be stopped, can cause stress, even depression in adolescents [12].

However, one study explained that not all teenagers whose parents divorced are bound to be negatively impacted. Research conducted by Eldar-Avidan et al. [13] explained that if teenagers can let go and understand that divorce is a way to end an unsatisfactory and unhappy marriage, they get back on their feet and adapt more easily to these conditions.

The individual's ability to let go and bounce back from a difficult event, such as a parent's divorce, shows that the individual has resilience [14]. Resilience is an individual's ability to develop in the face of adversity [15].

One of the factors that contribute to the formation of resilience is locus of control [16]. Locus of control acts as a controller in negative situations the individual experience [17]. Locus of control is the individual's belief about their control in dealing with certain events in life [18].

There are studies showing that adolescents with divorced parents and have an internal locus of control tend to have better resilience abilities, which are useful for getting back up and adapting after their parents' divorce. In contrast, adolescents with divorced parents and have external locus of control tend to be poorer in developing resilience abilities [17,19].

The research question in this study is "is there a relationship between locus of control and resilience in adolescents whose parents are divorced?"

## 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Reivich and Shatte [20] define resilience as an individual's ability to survive, rise, and adapt to difficult conditions. According to Campbell-Sills & Stein [21], resilience is an individual's ability to thrive in the face of adversity. Resilience is a multidimensional characteristic that varies in context, time, age, gender, culture, and the life of each individual [15].

Campbell-Sills and Stein [21] explained that there are two aspects that indicate whether an individual has resilience, which are hardiness and persistence. Hardiness is the ability to overcome unexpected changes or conditions that occur in life, such as suffering, stress, pressure, or unpleasant feelings, while persistence is the belief that the individual can achieve a certain goal because the individual believes that they have put all their efforts and abilities to achieve this goal.

Locus of control is the second cognitive device that has been found to influence the formation of resilience for individuals in distress [22]. Rotter [23] defines locus of control as a subjective perception of who, or what controls the events that occur in the individual's life.

There are two orientations in the locus of control, internal and external. If the individual believes that they are responsible for controlling their own life when experiencing difficulties, then the individual is said to have an internal locus of control. On the other hand, if the individual believes that they are unable to control their own life when experiencing difficulties, and prefers to depend on unpredictable external factors, such as luck, opportunity, then the individual is said to have an external locus of control [18]. Levenson [24] divides external locus of control into two dimensions, the powerful others, which means the individual believes that all events that occur in their lives are determined by other people who have more power over them, and chance, which is the belief that all events that occur in their lives are determined by fate, chance, and luck. The orientation of a person's locus of control tends to change with age and experience. During childhood, the locus of control tends to be external, but during adolescence, the locus of control shifts towards internal. Changes in orientation can occur due to the development of one's competencies, thus affecting the views and perceptions of individuals towards events in everyday life [25].

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

Participants who contributed to this study had several characteristics, namely: (1) parents had divorced; (2) teenagers aged 12 to 21 years and are male and female; (3) the participant was against the divorce at the time of occurrence.

This study was quantitative research. Based on the objectives, this study was included in the correlation study. This study used a purposive sampling method, which was carried out by distributing questionnaires online using google form.

This study involved 282 participants. The participants in the study were grouped by gender, age, the length of time the parents divorced, and the cause of the divorce. An illustration of the distribution of participants can be seen in the following tables.

**Table 1** Overview of research participants by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	112	39,72%
Female	170	60,28%
<b>Total</b>	282	100.0

Based on personal data that has been collected through questionnaires, it shows that the participants involved in this study are predominantly female, amounting to 170 people with a percentage of 60.28%, with the remaining 112 people were male with a percentage of 39, 72%.

**Table 2** Overview of research participants by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13 years	8	2,84%
14 years	15	5,32%
15 years	28	9,93%
16 years	32	11,35%
17 years	42	14,9%
18 years	39	13,83%
19 years	39	13,83%
20 years	35	12,4%
21 years	44	15,6%
<b>Total</b>	282	100.0

Based on personal data that has been collected through questionnaires, it shows that the participants involved in this study consisted of 8 participants aged 13 (2.84%), 15 participants aged 14 (5.32%), 28 participants aged 15 (9.93%), 32 participants aged 16 (11.35%), 42 participants aged 17 years (14.9%), 39 participants aged 18 years (13.83%). 39 participants aged 19 (13.83%). 35 participants aged 20 (12.4%). 44 participants aged 21 (15.6%).

**Table 3** Overview of participants based on how long parents have divorced

Time since Divorce	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	133	47,17%

1 years – 5 years	111	39,37%
6 years – 10 years	34	12,05%
More than 10 years	4	1,41%
<b>Total</b>	282	100,0

Based on personal data that has been collected through questionnaires, the results show that the length of time the participants' parents have divorced varies greatly, from 1 month to 12 years.

**Table 4** Participant's description based on the causes of parents divorcing

Cause of Divorce	Frequency	Percentage
Constant argument	134	47,52%
Economic factor	49	17,38%
Domestic violence	21	7,45%
Affair	55	19,50%
Irresponsibility	10	3,55%
No Parental blessing at the wedding	2	0,71%
Extended family interfering with nuclear family matters	5	1,77%
Difference in beliefs	1	0,35%
Arranged marriage	2	0,71%
Substance abuse or other addictions such as gambling	3	1,06%
<b>Total</b>	282	100,0

Based on personal data that has been collected through questionnaires, it shows that the cause of divorce are varied. The research instrument that is used to measure the locus of control variable is the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scales arranged by Levenson [24]. This measuring instrument consists of 24 items, is favourable, and arranged with a 6-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The coefficient of internal consistency reliability on the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scales showed a result of 0.856, which means that this measuring instrument has very good reliability, and the research

instrument that is used to measure the resilience variable is the Connor Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD RISC-10) which has been adapted by Campbell-Sills and Stein [21]. This measuring instrument consists of 10 items. All items in this measuring instrument are favourable and arranged on a 4-point Likert scale (not true at all to very true). The coefficient of internal consistency reliability on this measuring instrument shows the result of 0.884, which means that this measuring instrument has very good reliability.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted a normality test first to find out whether the data the researcher had was normally distributed or not. The researcher tested it using One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and the results indicated that the locus of control variable had a value of  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , which implied that the locus of control variable had an abnormal data distribution, while the resilience variable had a value of  $p = 0.007. < 0.05$ , which implied that the resilience variable also had an abnormal data distribution. After knowing that the data obtained in this study were not normally distributed, the next step was to test the correlation between the locus of control variable and the resilience with the Spearman correlation method.

**Table 5** Correlation test between locus of control and resilience

			Resilience	Locus of Control
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	<b>Resilience</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	
	N		282	
	<b>Locus of Control</b>	Correlation Coefficient	0,777	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	.	
N		282	282	

From the results of research data processing on SPSS version 25 application, using the Spearman correlation test between locus of control and resilience variables, it was found that  $r = 0.777$  and  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . A significance value of 0.000 signifies that there is a strong and positive relationship between locus of control and resilience in adolescents whose parents are divorced with a correlation magnitude of 0.777, which means that the locus of control of adolescents whose parents are divorced affects how well adolescents deal with their parents' divorce.

**Table 6** Correlation test between dimensions locus of control and resilience

		<b>Internal</b>	<b>Powerful Others</b>	<b>Chance</b>
<b>Resilience</b>	r	0,885	0,370	0,432
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000

Based on the results of the correlation test between the dimensions locus of control and resilience, it shows that the higher the resilience, the more internal locus of control orientation that owned by adolescents whose parents were divorced. Adolescents with an internal locus of control believe that they can control their own lives while placing a value on their abilities and skills [24,26]. Grant et al. [27] explained that having a belief that we can control our own lives is a factor that helps individuals to become more resilient. An individual with the locus of control internal has characteristics such as a positive mindset about their success, ability to think effectively, hardworking, and problem-solving. With these characteristics, individuals can survive better and rise after their parents' divorce [28,29]. On the contrary, the lower the resilience, the more external locus of control orientation will be owned by adolescents from the parental divorce. External orientation locus of control plays little part in the formation of resilience because of the characteristics such as resignation, helplessness, and the belief that all things that happen in their lives are influenced by the external environment [30,31]. With these characteristics, individuals tend to limit themselves from active problem solving, so they are more easily to surrender and blame the situation or other people after their parents' divorce [17,19,32]. Even so, this study found that external locus of control is slightly related to the formation of resilience. Studies explain that when individuals with an external locus of control experience a problem and get social support from others, their level of resilience will increase. In addition, individuals who believe that all the problems they face are a form of the law of karma or the power of God, tend to be more accepting and easily rise from these problems [33,34,35].

## 5. SUGGESTION

Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggests that adolescents with a background of parental divorce begin to increase their understanding of resilience which is useful for dealing with various life problems, one of which is parental divorce. The understanding of resilience can be improved by attending seminars, or reading psychology journals that discuss resilience. Increasing the ability of

resilience can also be undertaken by incorporating positive aspects in oneself, such as believing that every individual has the capacity and ability to face all problems that arise in life. By having the belief, it points out that every individual has this capacity, individuals will also tend to more easily rise from pressing or traumatic problems.

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