EXPLORING CHILD MINDSETS IN BROKEN HOMES: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

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Abstract

The concept of a broken home refers to a family in a state of turmoil, disarray, and lack of direction, resulting in the dysfunction of the family structure and negatively impacting the mindset of children. This research endeavors to explore the mindset of children who come from broken homes. The study employs qualitative research methods and employs descriptive analysis. The findings of the research encompass the mindset of children before, during, and after experiencing a broken home. Prior to the occurrence of a broken home, children perceive their family as a source of happiness and warmth, where they find solace, support, and companionship from their parents. However, when a broken home situation arises, the children's family structure becomes fractured, leading them to feel a desire to end their lives, a sense of unworthiness of happiness, withdrawal from social interactions, unfulfilled needs, neglect of home and education, and a pervasive sense of fear and pessimism. Following a broken home, the child's mindset gradually reconstructs the lost self-concept, fostering independence and striving towards personal goals. It is important to note that the child's mindset will evolve and transform over time as they grow older and acquire knowledge, ultimately resulting in a more positive and adaptive mindset.

Keywords: Mindset, Children, Broken Home.

Introduction

Divorce has become a prevalent issue in Indonesia, with reports of divorce cases widely disseminated through online media and observed in our immediate surroundings (Adristi, 2021). Divorce is often attributed to various factors, such as poor communication within the family system and economic difficulties (Ardilla & Cholid, 2021). The term "broken home" originates from the notion of a fracture or split in the household, where harmony and warmth are lacking (Guanabara et al., 2020). Family breakdown, as explained by Sofyan S. Willis, can occur due to the death or divorce of family members, or due to structural damage within the family (Faradillah & Amriana, 2020; Muttaqin & Sulistyo, 2019; Trianingsih et al., 2019; Wulandri & Fauziah, 2019).

Echolis defines a broken home as a situation where children experience a loss of parental attention or lack of affection, often stemming from divorce (A'yuni et al., 2021). Furthermore, a broken home can be understood as a state of chaos, disorganization, and directionlessness within the family structure (Trianingsih et al., 2019). It is evident that broken homes have a significant impact on children's psychological well-being (Wahid et al., 2022). According to Santrock, the primary consequence of parental divorce on children is the psychological impact they endure (Adristi, 2021; Muttaqin & Sulistyo, 2019). Psychological changes in children, including mental and emotional shifts as well as changes in their mindset, are also highlighted (Munandar et al., 2020).

A child's mindset refers to their beliefs and perspectives that shape their behavior and attitudes, ultimately influencing their actions based on their observations, feelings, and experiences. Children who have experienced a broken home exhibit significant changes in their mindset, characterized by a withdrawn and lethargic demeanor, negative thinking, cowardice, feelings of guilt, and even potential psychiatric disorders such as stress and depression (Nasri et al., 2018; Theobald, 2013).

Based on empirical evidence from field research, it is evident that broken homes have a profound impact on children's mindsets. Children from broken homes often believe they are undeserving of complete happiness and love, as they observe other children who receive love and happiness from both parents. They perceive life as devoid of meaning due to the diminished harmony within their families. This vulnerable position makes it easier for children to entertain negative thoughts, although it does not imply they will act on them. Furthermore, these children tend to harbor a low sense of self-worth or self-concept.

Previous research has established that broken home children tend to have lower self-acceptance compared to children from intact families, who are more accepting of their strengths and weaknesses while acknowledging their past circumstances (Ifdil et al., 2020; Lestari, 2012). Self-concept, which encompasses an individual's self-perception, knowledge, expectations, and judgments about oneself, also plays a role in shaping their mindset (Wahid et al., 2022). Children experiencing psychological pressure often endure deep trauma, which hampers their ability to find happiness (Linawati, 2018).

Previous studies have extensively explored the topic of broken homes in children, primarily focusing on the broad psychological impact. However, the current research aims to specifically investigate the mindset of children from broken homes in a comprehensive and detailed manner. Unlike previous studies, this research adopts qualitative methods and draws upon relevant literature, such as studies by Ifdil et al. (2020), Massa et al. (2020), and Wijaya (2012). By employing qualitative methods, this study delves deeper into the mindset of children from broken homes, offering a more thorough analysis. Furthermore, the chosen location and timeframe differ from previous research efforts. Consequently, this study is of great significance in providing valuable insights into the experiences of children from broken homes, serving as a foundation for future investigations. The primary objective of this study is to examine the mindset of children from broken homes.

Method

In this study, a qualitative research method is employed, which involves conducting a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the issue at hand (Sugiono, 2021). The population under investigation consists of children who have experienced a broken home. A purposive sampling technique is utilized, whereby a sample of five children is selected based on predetermined criteria. The research also includes the collection of demographic data pertaining to the research subjects table 1.

Table 1 The Collection Of Demographic Data Pertaining To The Research Subjects

No	Subject	Gender	Age	Status
1	AS	Female	22	University Student
2	AC	Female	22	University Student
3	P	Male	17	Student
4	LM	Male	18	Student
5	MN	Male	17	Student

The data collection for this study involved the utilization of observation and interviews as techniques. Interviews were particularly employed to gather in-depth information pertaining to the mindset of children from broken homes. The data collection process commenced with field observations conducted at various potential research locations. Eventually, the researchers selected Brigdjen Zein Hamid, Gg Rapi Kec. Medan Johor as the research site, based on predetermined criteria. Subsequently, open interviews were conducted with the research informants after further observation. The research was conducted between February 22nd and February 28th, 2023. The data collection instruments utilized in this study included audio recording devices, smartphones, cameras, and notebooks containing interview questions. Throughout the research process, the collected data was analyzed using the approach proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involved data reduction, data presentation, and data collection. In order to enhance the validity of the data, triangulation was employed, incorporating multiple sources, time points, and techniques, thereby ensuring scientific rigor and responsibility.

Result and Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, the condition of the broken home can be categorized into three, namely before the broken home, during the broken home and after the broken home.**:**

Table 2 The Condition Of The Broken Home

Indicator	Results	Informant statement
Before the broken homes	Always happy	The subject remembered that every moment he passed he was always happy, he was invited to take a vacation every week. (US, 22-02-2023) (SC, 23-02-2023) (MN, 24-02-2023)
	Get love and attention	The subject always remembered questions from both parents with simple questions, have they eaten, done their assignments, been hugged, kissed by their father or mother. USA, 22-02-2023),(SC, 23-02-2023), (MN, 24-02-2023), (LM, 26-02-2023), (P, 28-02-2023)
	Parents as a home to return to, shelter and sharing	The subject remembered when he had problems confiding with his mother when his girlfriend dumped him, and was shunned by friends (AS 22-02-2023), (SC, 23-02-2023), (P, 28-02-2023)
	Needs are met	The subject remembered when the desire to buy a new cellphone, traveled and what was needed was always fulfilled (MN, 24-02-2023), (LM, 26-02-2023)
During the broken home	Mind chaotic heart broken, hopeless, want to end life, and think not worthy to be happy	Subject had shut himself in his room, did not eat, and almost even drank poison (AS, 22-02-2023), (SC, 23-02-2023)
	Unmet need	The subject remembered when he wanted to go to school without

		pocket money, (LM, 26-02-2023), (P, 28-02-2023)
	Lost family	Subject recalled his father leaving and remarrying and seeing him rarely (USA, 22-02-2023), (SC, 23-02-2023)
	Not socializing	Subject isolateed himself and withdraws from school friends (MN, 24-02-2023), P (28-02-2023)
	Lost hope for education	The subject remembered when he did not go to campus for 3 months (US, AC)
After the broken home	Acceptance of self	Subjects remembered accepting that they were children of a broken home (AS, AC, MN, LM, Dan P 22, 23, 24, 26, 28- 02-2023)
	Achieve independence	Subject remembered working to meet the needs of AS, AC, MN, LM, and P 22, 23, 24, 26, 28- 02-2023)
	Continuing your ideals or education	Subject re-entered AS, AC, MN, LM, and P schools 22, 23, 24, 26, 28- 02-2023)

According to the interviews conducted, the study involved five informants, consisting of three males and two females. Among them, two informants were enrolled in college while also working, and the remaining three informants were high school students. The informants' initials are AS, SC, P, LM, and MN. All of these informants have experienced a broken home, having previously come from intact families. However, due to various issues within their families, their parents made the decision to separate.

The causes of broken homes differ among families, and several factors contribute to the occurrence of divorce. Firstly, the lack of affection between the spouses is a significant factor. Secondly, parental immaturity, characterized by selfishness and egoism, plays a role. Thirdly, economic problems often contribute to divorce, where the husband fails to meet the family's basic needs for clothing, shelter, and food (Ardilla & Cholid, 2021; Muttaqin & Sulistyo, 2019). Additionally, divorce can be attributed to psychological factors, such as a change in attitude within the household, the loss of initial love, a lack of comfort, and compatibility, ultimately leading to conflicts (Jannah, 2018; Omoruyi, 2014).

Based on the gathered data, three themes emerged concerning the mindset of children from broken homes: the mindset before the occurrence of a broken home, the mindset during the broken home period, and the mindset after the broken home situation.

Before Broken Home

Each informant shared their experiences of their family being happy and affectionate prior to the divorce. They described their parents as a source of love, care, and support, a place to seek refuge and share their thoughts and activities. One of the informants stated, *"Before our parents divorced we were a happy family, we were always invited to go out, when we had holidays or just went to the mall, what I asked for was definitely obeyed, at that time I asked for a cell phone to buy a new cell phone" (Informant AS, AC).* Another informant mentioned, *"The parents were the ones I confided in when there were problems at school with friends or breaking up with boyfriends, parents would always ask why" (Informant P, AS).*

These statements align with previous research that emphasizes the crucial role of the entire family, particularly parents, in providing care, protection, welfare, knowledge, and moral guidance to their children. Furthermore, parents are seen as trusted friends, especially mothers, who offer protection, comfort, care, and affection to their children (Siahaan & Friska, 2016).

During Broken Home

When the informants experienced a broken home, their mindset underwent a significant change. Initially, they perceived their family as a comforting place to return to, but after the divorce, it became a desolate environment. They expressed feelings of brokenness and contemplated ending their lives. They felt unworthy of happiness, as their needs were unmet due to an irresponsible father and the loss of a home to go back to. These circumstances disrupted their social activities, education, and personality development, leading to pessimism and a sense of hopelessness. One informant shared, *"When I found out my parents were divorced, I was devastated, frustrated, and wanted to end my life. I felt ashamed, and when people know about my family problems, they often talk about us. I feel like they talk about me when I pass by them. This makes me unmotivated to go to college" (Informant LM, AC).* Another informant expressed sadness over the absence of their father and witnessing their mother's tears.

These expressions align with findings from previous research, which indicate that children from broken homes often experience negative thought patterns that disrupt their mental well-being, leading to depression and suicidal ideation. They also develop pessimistic outlooks on the future (Nasri et al., 2018).

Furthermore, it was discovered that a broken home significantly affects a child's mindset. Faced with such conditions, children tend to lose self-confidence, believe their goals cannot be achieved, have an uncertain future, blame themselves, and experience a decline in their ability to concentrate on their studies. These factors contribute to the development of a negative mindset in children affected by a broken home (Sundah, 2021).

After Broken Home

Following the broken home experience, the mindset of the children underwent another transformation. The informants shared how they worked towards rebuilding their self-concept to become confident, independent individuals who could pursue their aspirations and fulfill their own needs. Despite their parents' divorce and the challenges, they faced, they found the strength to embrace their past and unpleasant experiences, and they were determined to start anew with better self-acceptance, striving for a brighter future. One informant stated, *"After my parents divorced, my father remarried, so our curse was not fulfilled because my father prioritized his new wife. So from there, it made me work while studying in college to help pay for my studies and what I wanted. I also began to accept that I was born in a broken home, even when the neighbors gossiped about me, I was not so sad and concerned" (Informants AS, AC, LM, MN).*

According to previous researchers, the acceptance process of being a child from a broken home is not an easy one; it requires time and effort to reach the acceptance stage and come to terms with their challenging past (Dewi and Herdiyanto, 2018; Ifdil et al., 2020; Lestari, 2012). Through this acceptance, children gradually develop independence, particularly when they are not financially dependent on their parents, especially their fathers (Desmita, 2012; Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Broken home children who become independent individuals have the advantage of being self-sufficient, not relying on their family, and being more autonomous in their actions and decisions (Sa'diyah, 2017). They

tend to exhibit an independent personality characterized by problem-solving skills, creativity, proactivity, self-control, and responsibility (Alwisol, 2009). Additionally, self-acceptance plays a crucial role in this process, as it starts with the child's self-concept and self-evaluation (Wahid et al., 2022).

In terms of limitations, the researcher encountered challenges in scheduling meetings with the informants due to their busy academic schedules. Furthermore, some informants exhibited a lack of openness during the interviews, which required additional time and effort from the researchers to obtain meaningful results. It is worth noting that previous research on the mindset of children from broken homes is limited, with most studies focusing on the broad psychological impacts rather than delving into the specific aspects of their mindset.

Conclusion

Divorce significantly influences the thinking or mindset of children, which can be categorized into three stages: pre-broken home, during the broken home, and post-broken home. Prior to experiencing a broken home, children perceive their family as a source of happiness and warmth, where parents provide love, care, and a sense of belonging. However, when the family undergoes a divorce, their mindset undergoes a drastic shift. They may feel shattered, contemplate self-harm, harbor feelings of unworthiness and unhappiness, withdraw from social interactions, struggle with unmet needs, experience instability in their living arrangements, neglect their education, and adopt a pessimistic outlook.

However, as time goes on, the child's mindset begins to evolve and adapt. After experiencing a broken home, there is a gradual process of rebuilding their self-concept and regaining their independence. They develop a renewed determination to work towards their goals and aspirations, striving to overcome the challenges presented by their fractured family dynamic.

In order to enhance the understanding of children's mindsets in the context of broken homes, it is recommended to expand the number of informants in future studies. This would provide a more comprehensive and diverse range of perspectives, yielding richer and more meaningful insights into the subject matter. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to explore alternative research methods, aiming to contribute novel findings and updates to the existing body of knowledge in this field.

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Author Contributions Statement

AMN served as the primary author, assuming the role of the principal investigator responsible for conducting field observations, interviews, and analyzing the research findings. AMN also took the lead in crafting this scientific article, fulfilling the requirements for graduation. AAD, on the other hand, contributed as the second author, providing guidance, supervision, and overall direction to the main author throughout the research process, from its inception to the completion of the scientific article.

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