

Early Adults with Divorced Parents: What is the Role of Self-Esteem and Self-Disclosure in Fear of Intimacy?

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Abstract

Parental divorce can affect how an individual develops self-esteem and self-disclosure in themselves. This study aimed to determine the relationship between self-esteem and, self-disclosure, and fear of intimacy. This study uses a quantitative research design involving 300 participants. Participants were obtained through purposive sampling techniques with the criteria of individuals who have divorced parents and are 18-25 years old. The data were then analyzed using a multivariate analysis method using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of the LISREL 8.80 program. The results showed that self-esteem and self-disclosure were negatively and significantly correlated with fear of intimacy. The findings of this study indicate that self-esteem and self-disclosure are important factors that play a role in the development of fear of intimacy in young adults. This study implies that interventions to increase self-esteem and self-disclosure can help reduce fear of intimacy.

Keywords: family development, fear of intimacy, self-esteem, self-disclosure, *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM)

Abstrak

Perceraian orang tua dapat memengaruhi bagaimana seorang individu mengembangkan *self-esteem* dan *self-disclosure* dalam dirinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara *self-esteem* dan *self-disclosure* terhadap *fear of intimacy*. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan melibatkan 300 partisipan. Partisipan diperoleh melalui teknik purposive sampling dengan kriteria individu yang memiliki orang tua bercerai dan dalam rentang usia 18- 25 tahun. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan metode analisis multivariat dengan menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) dengan bantuan program LISREL 8.80. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa variabel *self-esteem* dan *self-disclosure* dengan *fear of intimacy* saling berkorelasi negatif dan signifikan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *self-esteem* dan *self-disclosure* merupakan faktor penting yang berperan dalam perkembangan *fear of intimacy* pada individu dewasa muda. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa intervensi yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan *self-esteem* dan *self-disclosure* dapat membantu mengurangi *fear of intimacy*.

Kata kunci: *fear of intimacy*, harga diri, pengungkapan diri, perkembangan keluarga, *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM)

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Introduction

Family is an important foundation in every individual's life. As the smallest unit in society, the family has a crucial role in shaping every individual in family. The family is the first madrasa for every child (Anabella & Utami, 2022). Family plays an important role in instilling values and social and forming character and personality in children (Riyanti et al., 2023). The family environment is also crucial in developing children's trust, independence, and initiative (Martin, et al., 2018). Patterns foster a parent's role, which is significant and effective in forming experiences and developing individuals. Because of that, the atmosphere of a harmonious, dynamic, and capable family brings up a connection that leads to a connection between parents and child that is very needed (Fatah & Hartini, 2022a; Islamia, 2023). In essence, every individual wants a harmonious family that gives life experience that can be used to help with developmental tasks (Saputra et al., 2023). However, disputes and conflicts have no free connection in the family and have already become a matter that generally happens (Veronika et al., 2022). Thus, continuous problems and conflicts will often lead to divorce (Qodir, 2023; Islamia, et al., 2019).

Failure of relationship between husband and wife in overcoming problems happens and the impact may not only felt by separated parents, but also it has far-reaching impacts on children in the process of building character, personality and developmental tasks of their children will be disrupted (Felisilda & Torreon, 2020; Salsabila & Mahasin, 2023; Santiago et al., 2023). The disturbed connection between the parents and a child will influence the characteristics and quality of intimacy later in their child's adulthood (Farahdilla & Indrijati, 2022; Fatah & Hartini, 2022). Furthermore, through the conflict and quarrel, which finally ended in divorce, will become a bad dream for their children.

Based on data from 2016 until 2022, divorce cases in Indonesia are increasingly becoming a trend, especially in several areas, one of which is Lampung Province. It can be seen from the Central Agency data Statistics Indonesia (2023) enhancement of divorce in Province Lampung, with a total of 15,033 divorce cases, from various factors that trigger divorce. The trend in divorce cases this year continues in stage renewal; however, if we look at the chart from previous years, the predicted number will experience enhancement.

Not only for husband and wife as a couple, but also for children, divorce causes a lack of attention and nurturing which that they provide impact which is essential for them (Haslan & Alqadri, 2023; Salsabila & Mahasin, 2023; Suroso & Arsanti, 2023; Veronika et al., 2022). Feelings of sadness, anxiety, and closing yourself off, even more than that, have an impact on the development process at the next stage, especially in terms of intimacy (Santrock, 2024). Based on age, early adult individuals aged 20-30 years have the task of developing intimacy, if an individual fail in this case then he will be isolated (Santrock, 2024)

Intimacy is an important psychological factor in developmental tasks in early adulthood (Utami & Murti, 2017). Children with divorced parents will have difficulty in building intimacy with the person other consequences incident traumatic which

experienced in the family (Fatah & Hartini, 2022a). This might happen due to the absence of a "role model" as a place for children to learn to understand interpersonal attachment. This causes problems in forming romantic relationships, called fear of intimacy. Fear of intimacy, as defined by Descutner et al. (1991) arises when anxiety prevents individuals from sharing meaningful emotions and ideas in communication with partners or significant others (Riazi & Manouchehri, 2024). Bartholomew (1990); Zdankiewicz-Ścigała, et al. (2024) stated, fear of intimacy is a disturbance in the capacity to form attachment, which is obtained from internalizing experiences in the family. Thus, the role of the family is an important element in helping the formation of intimacy. Meanwhile, the grand theory used in this study is Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory which explains how early experiences with caregivers shape a person's marital patterns in romantic relationships in adulthood (Van der Horst, et al., 2024). If a child experiences inconsistent, neglectful, or abusive care, they may develop insecure attachment styles. These styles can lead to fear of intimacy in adulthood, as individuals may anticipate rejection or abandonment.

Fear of intimacy usually starts to be felt when entering adulthood, especially when the individual has experienced trauma during their growth period (Pertiwi & Kusumiati, 2024). Recent research, Farahdilla and Indrijati (2022), explains that there are significant differences in fear of intimacy based on the style of adult romantic attachment in early adulthood with divorced parents. Research shows that the interactions that occur in a romantic relationship with a partner have a pattern that is similar to a child's interactions with his family. Connection, quality, and experienced interaction within the family influence how an individual will think, see, and feel something connected there people in the future (Mufidah & Dewi, 2022).

Forming interpersonal relationships requires individual contribution and readiness as social beings. This readiness is known from how individuals interpret their self-esteem. According to (Rosenberg, 1979) self-esteem is the development of a person's self-perspective seen from the description of social assessments and comparisons. Several studies have emphasized the role of self-esteem as a primary determinant in psychological outcomes, surpassing the influence of intimacy in its predictive strength (Amalia & Pahrul, 2019; Fatah & Hartini, 2022a). Self-esteem influences how individuals build intimacy with another person. The second study found a significant connection in direction. The lower or negative level of an individual's self-esteem, the higher the fear of intimacy.

Furthermore Putri and Kusmiati (2022) emphasize self-esteem more deeply, emphasizing that other aspects of life are the main predictors in the form of self in the individual environment and family. Disharmony family and existing conflicts form the foundations of low self-esteem (Fatah & Hartini, 2022b). It means the family is room First and main for children to understand life processes. Individuals who experience parental divorce tend to have low self-esteem (Muhayati et al., 2022). Excessive fear, unwillingness to interact, and closing off the self from the environment have social and emotional impacts from divorce, which has great potential to cause individuals to experience fear of intimacy (Maharani & Adriansyah, 2021).

The experience of parental divorce can give rise to traumatic experiences capable of changing a family's dynamics and the family's connection (Fanysa, 2022). This influences individuals in the form of interpersonal connections. Disclosure of self-own connection, which is strong with quality friendship between individuals or intimacy in friendship and romance (Saputra et al., 2023). Self-disclosure facilitates individuals in intertwining something connection interpersonal (Anggraeni, 2015; Tania & Nurudin, 2021; Treise et al., 2019).

The conflict between couple which may ended in divorce, impacts how individuals open themselves in the social environment (Herlany, 2022). Lack of self-disclosure can influence individuals to build intimacy (Oktaviana & Kristinawati, 2022). The inability of individuals to build trust and emotional openness in relationships results in fear of intimacy, so the level of openness self-influences the level of fear of intimacy individual (Anggraeni, 2015; Febriani et al., 2021; Simbolon et al., 2022). The large number of divorce cases that occur in Indonesia results in children from families divorcing the prone to problems in building intimacy and hinder task current development entering age mature beginning.

Various research has explored and emphasized the importance of research on the fear of intimacy. This research is important because of several factors, including the increasing divorce rate in Indonesia, specifically in the Lampung area, which will impact the psychological well-being of children and continue into adulthood. In addition, there is a gap in knowledge about how divorce will impact the fear of intimacy in early adulthood. Only little attention has been paid to determining the factors related to the fear of intimacy. The novelty of this research also includes the analysis of variables based on a multidisciplinary approach from the perspective of psychology and family science. In addition, SEM analysis is expected to provide a detailed understanding of the relationship between variables, which has not been widely carried out in previous research on related topics. Therefore, this research contributes to predicting that self-esteem and self-disclosure are internal factors that have the possibility of being closely related to the formation of fear of intimacy in early adults whose parents are divorced. Furthermore, this research is important to find a direct connection between self-esteem and self-disclosure in the mature beginning, which is when one's person is divorced, using a quantitative approach.

Methods

Participants

This study employed a quantitative approach using a multivariate analysis design. The sampling technique applied was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. Participants were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) individuals aged between 18 and 25 years, (2) individuals with divorced parents (either legally divorced or separated), and (3) individuals currently involved or having been involved in a romantic relationship, whether dating or married. Recruitment was carried out through online survey distribution using platforms such as social media (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter) and university mailing lists to reach the target demographic.

Prior to participation, respondents were screened using a short eligibility questionnaire to ensure that they met all inclusion criteria. A total of 300 participants from various regions across Indonesia took part in the study, with a majority identifying as female ($n = 231$). The average age of participants was 21 years. Data collection took place between September 2023 and July 2024

Measurement

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) (Rosenberg, 1979). Self-esteem is defined as an individual's subjective assessment of his/her self-worth. Self-esteem includes beliefs about oneself, such as self-confidence, competence, and self-worth (Čerešník et al., 2022). Fear of intimacy was measured using the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) which refers to the concerns individuals feel about sharing personal information, forming emotional bonds, and expressing vulnerability in intimate relationships (Descutner & Thelen, 1991). Meanwhile, self-disclosure is measured using the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) which refers to messages about oneself that are communicated to others (Wheeless, 1976).

The Self-Esteem Scale adapted from Rosenberg (RSE) (Rosenberg, 1979) has 10 items consisting of 5 Favorable items and 5 Unfavorable items. After conducting validity and reliability tests, it turned out that it was necessary to drop out one item that was declared unfit because it had a Loading Factor value < 0.50 . After being dropped out, the model fit value was obtained and declared valid and reliable, the t -value was obtained > 1.96 and $LF > 0.50$, which means that the model with one factor (unidimensional) can be accepted and there is no difference between the data and the theory.

Self-disclosure in this study was measured by adapting the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) (Wheeless, 1976) measuring instrument which has a total of 35 statements. The results of the validity and reliability tests showed that the items did not meet the Loading Factor > 0.50 criteria so that 10 items needed to be dropped out. After the items were dropped out, the results were finally shown in the Goodness of Fit Index. The fit results were quite good after the invalid items were dropped out. The results are said to be fit if they meet 4-5 goodness of fit criteria (Hair et. al, 2012). Fear of Intimacy was measured by adapting the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) (Descutner & Thelen, 1991). FIS has 34 items. Some items do not meet the Loading Factor > 0.50 criteria so that these items need to be dropped out to produce values that meet the criteria. After being dropped out, the results show valid and reliable. The results of the model fit became better after dropping out invalid items, then the instrument value was able to meet the goodness of fit criteria and was declared good with other criteria, obtained t -value > 1.96 and $LF > 0.50$, which means a model with one factor (unidimensional) can be achieved. received on first order and reflects the analyzed variables.

Analysis

Based on the research objective, namely knowing the relationship between Self-esteem (X_1) and Self Disclosure (X_2) on Fear of Intimacy (Y) by the research framework, a full Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model was carried out using Lisrel 8.80 software, it allows for simultaneous examination of complex relationships among latent variables (self-esteem, self-disclosure, and fear of intimacy), accounts for measurement

errors, and tests both direct and indirect effects. Compared to regression or path analysis, SEM provides better model fit evaluation and is ideal for validating multi-item constructs. This approach is aligned with the study's aim to explore the interrelationships between internal psychological constructs within a comprehensive model. Which can be seen in the Figure 1.

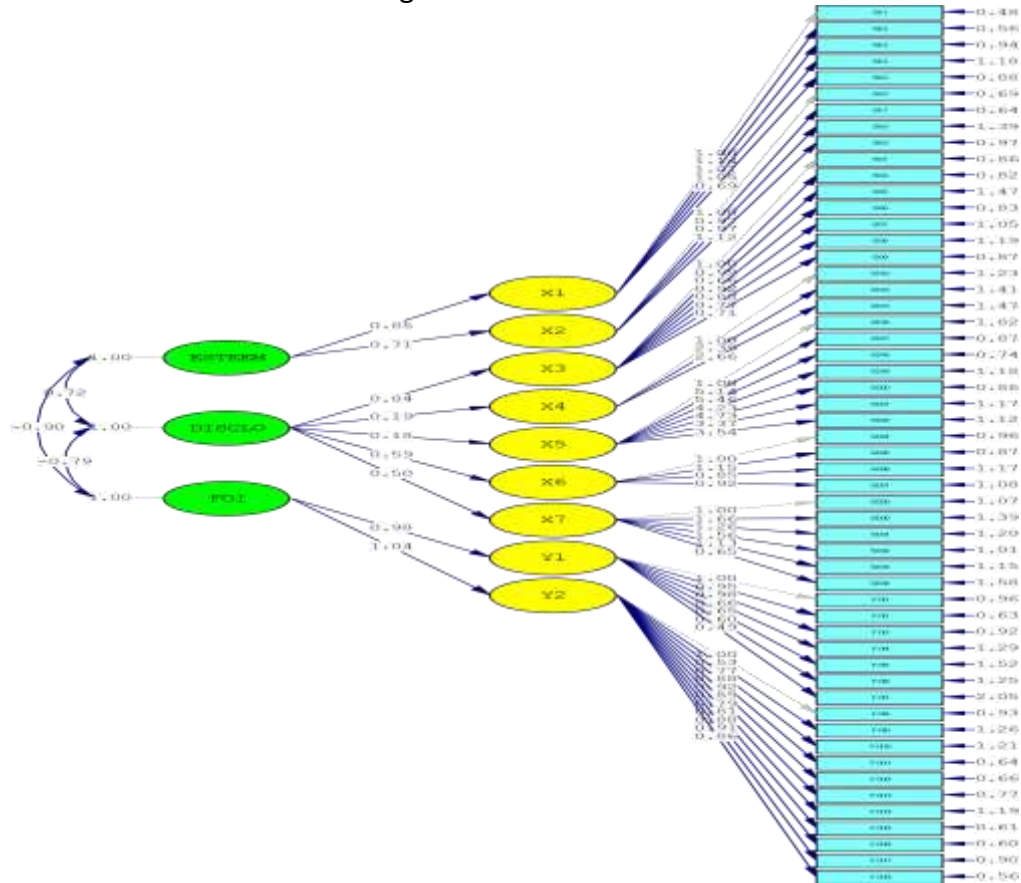


Figure 1. Second order model of the relationship between self-esteem and self-disclosure on fear of intimacy

The model test results are presented in the figure and an evaluation is carried out based on goodness of fit criteria. The model criteria and critical values are presented for the suitability of the data (Table 1).

Table. 1 Evaluation of goodness of fit full model criteria

Goodness Of Fit	Cutt-off-value	Results	Conclusion
X-Chi-Square	Expected to be small	8374.18	Poor fit
Significant	≥ 0.05	0.0	
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.13	Poor Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.49	Poor Fit
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.45	Poor Fit
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.89	Medium Fit
NNFI	≥ 0.90	0.92	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.92	Fit

The data processing results for goodness of fit testing show that four criteria are declared good and four are declared less good. The use of goodness of fit criteria can be seen in NFI, NNFI, CFI, and t-value, which fulfill the t-value criteria must be > 1.96 , which means that the resulting model can be said to be significant and can identify the indicators that most influence and indicate that the aspects and items that are contained in it effectively measures the desired construct. Figure 2 shows that all aspects and indicators have good t-values that support the goodness of fit results, hypothesis testing can be carried out.

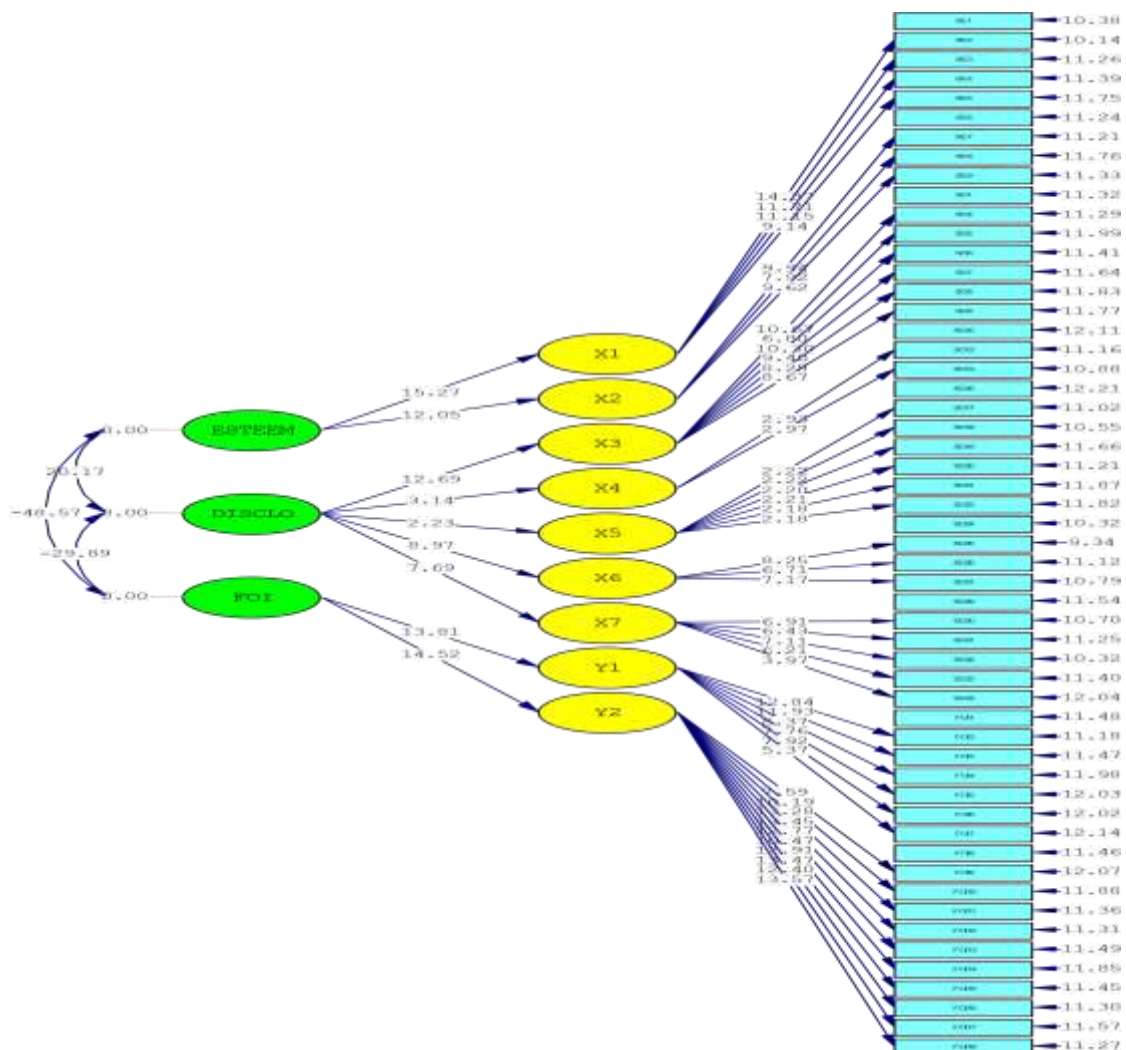


Figure 2. Full model T-Value result of the relationship between self-esteem and self-disclosure on fear of intimacy

Findings

Participant's Demographic

Based on the analysis of research data conducted on 300 respondents, a comprehensive demographic picture was obtained with the following characteristics. The research sample showed a predominance of female respondents with a proportion

of 77% (231 individuals) compared to men who only covered 23% (69 individuals). The age range of respondents was distributed relatively homogeneously, with the 18-21 year group at 51% (151 individuals) and the 22-25 year group at 49% (149 individuals).

Significant findings revealed that 68% of respondents (204 individuals) came from families with parental divorce status, which has the potential to provide a unique perspective in the context of social dynamics. Relationship status is dominated by the dating category 63% (191 individuals), with variations in single, married, and other categories. The composition of respondents based on employment status shows a balance between workers (55%) and students (45%) reflecting a representative sample of the productive age group. Descriptive statistical results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristic of respondents

Type	Classification	n	%
Gender	Man	69	23
	Woman	231	77
	Total	300	100
Age	18-21	151	51
	22-25	149	49
	Total	300	100
Parental Status	Divorced	204	68
	Parental separation due to death	96	32
	Total	300	100
Relationship status	Dating	191	63
	single	90	30
	Marry	8	4
	HTS	7	3
	Total	300	100
Job-status	Worker	164	55
	Student	136	45
	Total	300	100

Relationship between Self-Esteem, Self-Disclosure, and Fear of Intimacy

The results of the analysis in this research are used to see the relationship and influence of the variables self-esteem and self-disclosure, respectively, on fear of intimacy by the problem formulation and hypothesis. After the analysis, the suitability test results are divided into three parts, with significant negative and significant positive relationships. Then, the resulting hypothesis test shows a relationship and influence between self-esteem, self-disclosure, and fear of intimacy. variable X and variable Y. Table 3 presents the suitability test results for the Self-Esteem variable , the Self-Disclosure variable , and the Fear of Intimacy.

Table 3. Test of the suitability of relationships between variables

Variable	Standardized Loading Factor /R	t- Value	Statistical Conclusion
Self-Esteem → Fear of Intimacy*	-0.90	-48.57	Negative-Significant
Self Disclosure → Fear of Intimacy*	-0.79	-29.89	Negative-Significant
Self-Esteem → Self Disclosure*	0.72	20.17	Positive- Significant

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all relationships are proven to be significant, as can be seen from the positive and negative t-values > 1.96. The data presented proves that the hypothesis in this study is accepted, as evidenced by the influence among self-esteem, self-disclosure, and fear of intimacy variables X and Y, as shown by the Structural Equations data presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypotheses test based on structural equations

No	Variable	t- Value	Statistical Conclusion
1	Self-Esteem - > Fear of Intimacy	7.73	H ₀ is rejected H ₁ is accepted
2	Self Disclosure -> Fear of Intimacy	5.53	H ₀ is rejected H ₂ is accepted
3	Self-Esteem -> Self Disclosure	20.17	H ₀ is rejected H ₃ is accepted

The results of the first hypothesis analysis show that the proposed theoretical hypothesis is proven with a statistical value of 7.73 > t-Value 1.96, which means that H₀ is rejected. It is concluded that there is an influence between self-esteem and fear of intimacy in early adult individuals who have divorced parents. It can be concluded that a person's level of self-esteem can affect how afraid they are to have intimate relationships with others and the experience of having divorced parents can be a factor that forms the dynamics between self-esteem and fear of intimacy. This finding can be an important consideration in the context of counseling or therapy for early adult individuals with a background of divorced parents.

The second hypothesis shows a statistical value of 5.53 > t-Value 1.96, which means that H₀ is rejected, so it can be concluded that there is an influence between self disclosure or a person's self-disclosure on the level of fear of intimacy or fear in building relationships in early adult individuals who have divorced parents. The third hypothesis shows a statistical value of 20.17 > t-Value > 1.96, which means that H₀ is rejected, so it is concluded that there is an influence of self-esteem and self-disclosure in early adult individuals on the experience of fear of intimacy in their lives with the background of divorced parents. This suggests that the more open a person is about their feelings and experiences, the more likely they are to overcome or reduce their fear of emotional closeness with others. Therefore, for individuals who have a divorced family background, it is important to encourage them to share their feelings and life experiences.

The statistical analysis test shows a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and fear of intimacy. From the data processing results, the estimated coefficient is -0.90, which means that the higher a person's self-esteem, the lower the Fear of Intimacy in early adult individuals with divorced parents. The next analysis test shows an estimated coefficient of -0.79, which means there is a significant negative relationship between Self-disclosure and Fear of Intimacy in individuals whose parents are divorced. Based on the results of this analysis, the higher the self-disclosure, the lower the fear of intimacy for early adult individuals who live with divorced parents. Individuals who are more open in sharing their feelings, experiences, and concerns, especially regarding family background or past trauma, will tend to feel more comfortable and less afraid in intimate relationships. This is especially relevant for young adult individuals with divorced parents, as they may have trauma or fears that are rooted in childhood experiences. Encouraging them to open up more, both in the context of therapy and personal relationships, can help reduce fears about intimacy.

In other results, an estimated coefficient of 0.72 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between self-disclosure and self-esteem in early adult individuals who have divorced parents. The higher the Self-esteem, the higher the self-disclosure in early adult individuals who have divorced parents. The same results were concluded: self-disclosure in intimate relationships is positively related to self-esteem in young adults, relationship self-esteem, responsiveness, relationship satisfaction, love, and commitment over time connection.

Discussion

Research with early adult respondents aged 18 to 25 years who have divorced parents shows that the variables involved act as strong predictors of individual developmental tasks in building intimacy (Santrock, 2011). The results show that the test scores in this research have a negative relationship with each variable. The findings support previous evidence that lower self-esteem and self-disclosure are associated with higher fear of intimacy, especially among individuals from divorced families. This confirms the statement Fatah and Hartini, (2022) that individuals whose parents experienced divorce will have a lower self-esteem level compared to individuals from harmonious families, so this disrupts the intimacy process at the stage of human development. From an attachment theory perspective, this can be understood as the result of insecure attachment formed through inconsistent, neglectful, or emotionally unavailable caregiving. As a result, they may develop negative internal working models of attachment, leading to difficulties in initiating or maintaining close relationships. This is in line with Bowlby-Ainsworth's theory which posits that early attachment experiences form the basis of future relationship expectations. Furthermore, these findings underscore the need for psychological support and resilience-building interventions targeting young adults from non-intact families to foster healthy relational development.

Parental divorce greatly impacts individual development because individuals are forced to continue living in conditions of loss, which changes all situations. Children of divorced parents often exhibit increased anxiety and depression, with research showing

a direct correlation between divorce and decreased self-esteem (Dilla & Wado, 2024) . The changes that occur will trigger a decline in self-esteem, disrupting the stages of human development (Harris & Orth, 2019). The strong effect of self-esteem found in this study, stronger than self-disclosure, may reflect its role as a core component of internal attachment representations. Unfortunately, individuals who have divorced or incomplete parents are known to be more susceptible to experiencing Fear of Intimacy (Pertiwi & Kusumiati, 2024).

Another psychological attribute in this study that influences fear of intimacy is self-disclosure. After divorce, parenting patterns will change, and the quality of relationships, openness, and attachment between parents and children will be disrupted, thus affecting the way children think, reflect, and feel in relationships with others (Siregar et al., 2024). However, self-disclosure may act more as a behavioral expression of internal security than as a predictor on its own. This impact will be carried over and interpreted when entering adulthood when building romantic relationships. Related to this, this study found that self-disclosure is related to fear of intimacy in individuals whose parents are divorced. Yet, compared to self-esteem, self-disclosure may be more context-dependent, requiring a sense of trust and emotional safety already in place. This is also supported by the results of the study showing that the quality of attachment to parents, especially fathers, plays an important role in encouraging self-disclosure among adolescents. When the attachment is strong, self-disclosure tends to increase, indicating that the parental relationship significantly influences this behavior and lack of self-disclosure can exacerbate feelings of isolation and fear of intimacy, creating a cycle that inhibits emotional relationships (Riazi & Manouchehri, 2024 ; Muchlisah & Murdiana, 2024; Salsabila & Abdullah, 2021).

The analysis results show that self-disclosure and fear of intimacy have a negative relationship; the higher the self-disclosure, the lower the fear of intimacy, and vice versa. Related to this, several studies provide the view that individuals who have divorced parents have a higher potential to close themselves off (Hastuti & Kirana, 2021b; Munthe & Lunanta, 2022). Divorce caused by infidelity, betrayal, or deep loss makes individuals closer to protecting themselves from the same pain (Al Yakin, 2014). Teenagers respond to divorce with feelings of shock, confusion, and guilt over their parents' divorce. Individuals from divorced families report lower dyadic trust scores than intact families (Yilmaz et al., 2023). After parental divorce, difficulty in rebuilding trust is a risk that will occur to individuals in terms of building intimacy. Unfulfilled parental attachment patterns will be reflected when entering adulthood and establishing romantic relationships. However, there are gender differences, with women showing a slightly significant effect on trust related to the age of parental divorce compared to men (Viitanen, 2011).

The SEM test results in this study prove that the variables used influence the Fear of Intimacy of individuals whose parents are divorced. Self-esteem showed a stronger effect than self-disclosure, reinforcing the theoretical position that internal self-representations—shaped by early attachment experiences—are more predictive of intimacy-related outcomes. The standard loading factor and t-value contributed by each aspect to the item in measuring the variable are at the expected criteria. Looking at the criteria for respondents in this study, the majority of subjects were female, studies show

that girls often face increased emotional challenges after divorce, leading to an increased risk of psychological problems (Öz, et al, 2008; DICU, 2024) . From the data, it is known that divorce cases that have a big impact on children's fear of intimacy are divorced. This indicates that marital conflict that results in divorce greatly influences how children represent their future romantic relationships. besides that young adults need to increase their understanding of the value of their children because the better the children's values, the more prepared they are to have a family (Luailik & Halimatus Sa'diyah, 2023). This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of non-probability purposive sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The sample consisted predominantly of female participants, which may not fully represent the experiences of males in similar contexts. Second, the quantitative approach employed in this research may not adequately capture the subjective and emotional complexity of individuals' experiences regarding parental divorce and intimate relationship formation. Third, other contextual variables such as the level of parental conflict, duration since the divorce, and post-divorce parenting styles were not controlled, despite their potential influence on self-esteem and fear of intimacy. Future studies should consider incorporating attachment style directly as a mediating or moderating variable to more precisely identify causal mechanisms.

The limitation of this study is that it focuses on internal variables (self-esteem and self-disclosure), so it does not cover external factors that may influence fear of intimacy in individuals with divorced parents. In addition, the respondents of the study were predominantly women, so the results of the study may not represent the dynamics of fear of intimacy in men who have divorced parents. The limited age range of respondents (18-25 years) only represents the early adult group, so it cannot describe the phenomenon of fear of intimacy in other age groups who also experience parental divorce. This study also does not consider contextual variables such as the length of time since parental divorce occurred, the respondent's age when the divorce occurred, post-divorce parenting patterns, or the quality of the relationship with each parent after divorce. Finally, The research methodology does not include a qualitative approach that might provide a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of respondents related to fear of intimacy.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This research aims to find out whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and self-disclosure and fear of intimacy in early adults who have divorced parents. The findings confirmed that both self-esteem and self-disclosure significantly and negatively correlate with fear of intimacy, highlighting their role as key psychological predictors in relationship development. The results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and fear of intimacy, also between self-disclosure and fear of intimacy. This means that the higher self-esteem and self-disclosure, the lower the fear of intimacy in early adults who have divorced parents, and vice versa. Apart from that, in the independent variable, there is a positive correlation, the higher the self-esteem, the higher the self-disclosure. This research contributes to a better

understanding of how internal resources, such as self-worth and emotional openness, can serve as protective factors in overcoming intimacy difficulties among young adults from divorced families. Fear of intimacy can be a significant challenge for this group, and understanding the factors that influence it is an important step in developing effective intervention strategies.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, several applied recommendations can be offered. First, psychological counseling programs for young adults from divorced families should focus on self-esteem enhancement and training in emotional expression. Cognitive-behavioral interventions targeting negative self-perceptions and social avoidance may help reduce fear of intimacy. Second, family education initiatives can be designed for parents undergoing or post-divorce, highlighting the long-term psychological impact on children and encouraging positive co-parenting strategies that support children's emotional development. Third, these findings can inform the development of university courses or modules in family psychology and developmental counseling, emphasizing the role of attachment and self-concept in shaping adult relationships.

External variables that are studied more deeply than external factors, such as past experiences, family dynamics, social pressure, media influence, community, and social environment, play a role in developing fear of intimacy. More varied data analysis techniques should be used to find patterns in a more complex relationship than a simple linear relationship.

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