

Understanding the Meaning-Making of Romantic Relationships Among Emerging Adults After Parental Divorce

Carissa Azarine Delicia*¹, Nida Ul Hasanat¹
¹*Faculty of Psychology Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia*

Submission 14 March 2022 Accepted 2 July 2022 Published 26 August 2022

Abstract. Pursuing a romantic relationship is one of the most important developmental aspects of emerging adults. With the increasing divorce rate in Indonesia, the authors were interested in exploring how emerging adults make sense of romantic relationships after parental divorce. Three participants and two significant others were interviewed in this present study, in which interpretive phenomenological analysis was used as the approach to interpreting the data. This study generated two themes that show how emerging adults make meaning of romantic relationships, namely as a source of fear and a source of support. This contradictory meaning-making relates to the experience the participants had during their parents' divorce process and what they learned from the media or their significant others. These, coupled with human agency and the need for love, encourage the participants to learn from their parents' mistakes, develop certain behavioural patterns, and continue to seek romantic relationships in their lives. This study shows how interaction between parents during a divorce process can shape the meaning-making and behaviour patterns in the child's romantic relationships. Therefore, it is suggested that divorced parents build an open communication, show positive interactions, and minimize exposing their children to negative interactions during the divorce process.

Keywords: adulthood; divorce; emerging; interpretative phenomenological analysis; romantic relationship

Emerging adulthood is considered a time when individuals have reached their peak of development (Candow & Chilibeck, 2005; Sinnott, 2003; Thompson & Goodvin, 2007). They are ready to explore identities, make personal choices, and start a life of their own. One of the aspects of life that emerging adults explore is romantic relationships.

Having a romantic relationship can be beneficial for emerging adults. A romantic relationship can train skills necessary for future marriage (Shulman & Connolly, 2013), is a means of getting support and developing positive coping mechanisms (Kansky & Allen, 2018), and reduces internalizing symptoms such as depression or anxiety as well as externalizing symptoms such as the use of illicit substances (Collibee & Furman, 2015).

Some factors may affect the pursuance of romantic relationships by emerging adults, one of which is the family of origin. The Development of the Early Adult Romantic Relationship (DEARR) model reveals that family of origin can influence individuals' cognitions about romantic relationships and their behaviours in romantic relationships (Bryant & Conger, 2002).

*Address for correspondence: c.azarine@mail.ugm.ac.id

Family of origin plays a major role in shaping an early adult's cognition or attribution of romantic relationships. One of the examples is shown in a research by Allen and Mitchell (2015). They found how individuals can develop positive or negative perceptions and behaviour patterns in a romantic relationship based on their perception of their parents' relationship. South (2013) also found that emerging adults from divorced families tend to be more skeptical of romantic relationships, especially marriage, and believe their romantic relationship will end badly.

Meanwhile, the observational learning experiences in their family of origin can affect individual behaviours in romantic relationships. The observational learning hypothesis says children can learn behaviours by observing father-mother, parent-child, or between-siblings interactions (Capaldi & Clark, as cited in (Bryant & Conger, 2002)). Dinero et al. (2008) revealed that positive and warm family interactions can predict positive interactions and attachment security for their children in the future. On the other hand, interactions in families full of conflicts and quarrels result in unsatisfactory romantic relationships in the future because children cannot learn adequate social skills to maintain quality romantic relationships (Shanoora et al., 2020). For example, Sassler et al. (2009) discovered how unstable dynamics in the parents' romantic relationship formation, such as changes from dating, cohabiting, marriage, to divorce, can make their children develop romantic relationships that are unstable and unsatisfying, as managing a healthy one becomes an unfamiliar concept to them.

From the above descriptions, it can be concluded that family of origin has an important role in determining the characteristics of early adult romantic relationships (Bryant & Conger, 2002; Masarik et al., 2013). Unfortunately, not all families can maintain positive interactions. Divorce has become an option for many couples in Indonesia. Central Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that the divorce cases in Indonesia in 2020 and 2021 increased from 291,677 to 447,743. The common causes of divorce include negative experiences, such as verbal violence, economic problems, substance/drug abuse, gambling issues, and infidelity (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Dariyo, 2004). Moreover, during the divorce process, the parents usually exhibit poor interpersonal skills and parenting behaviour, creating an unfavourable and conflict-ridden family environment.

Studies have found the impact of parental divorce on early adult romantic relationships. Parental divorce can develop doubts about romantic relationships (Morrison et al., 2017), poor conflict-handling behaviour (Cui & Fincham, 2010), and a fearful type of attachment (Ozen, 2004). Emerging adults can also develop a more positive view of divorce, causing them to have a lower commitment in their romantic relationships (Cui et al., 2011). Hayashi and Strickland (1998) revealed that parents' attitudes towards divorce also impact how adults develop romantic relationships. Adult individuals whose parents accept and provide greater independence to their children have a more satisfying romantic relationship. They can readily establish closeness and trust with their partners. On the contrary, adult individuals who experienced conflicted parental divorce have difficulty establishing romantic relationships. They are easily jealous of their partner and have a fear of abandonment. However, other studies found that children from divorced families have higher life goals, expectations, and self-confidence (Chui & Wong, 2016). Parental divorce can also be a learning tool for children, enabling them to avoid the same mistakes their parents made (Mohi, 2015).

From the details above, it can be concluded that parental divorce can impact emerging adults when pursuing a romantic relationship. With the increasing divorce rate in Indonesia, it is necessary to conduct research on the impact of parental divorce during childhood on emerging adults, one of which is how emerging adults view romantic relationships following parental divorce.

Studies regarding parental divorce and their impact on emerging adults are not a novel contrivance in Indonesia. Kirana and Suprpti (2021) did research on the topic revealing the dynamics of psychological well-being in emerging adults with divorced parents. They showed how their research participants looked for happiness through hedonistic behaviours such as smoking and drinking alcohol to avoid the pain of their parents' divorce before coming to terms with it and developing a more eudaimonic view of life. Other studies examined how emerging adults develop post-traumatic growth (Purwanto & Hendriyani, 2020) and resilience (Amalia & Cahyanti, 2021) after parental divorce. These studies describe the internal process in emerging adults after experiencing parental divorce, though they have not touched the topic on how this experience impacts behavioural patterns, particularly in the subject of romantic relationships.

Furthermore, romantic relationships are one of the precursors of marriage, which is an important concept in Indonesia's culture. This is shown through how each culture in the country has different marriage customs, each and every one of them having profound meanings behind them. With the rising divorce numbers on the horizon of the country, the authors consider this study as a complement that can fill the gap in literature, as romantic relationships are a prominent part of emerging adult's life-span development in the context of Indonesia.

By examining the participants' experiences, the authors explored how emerging adults learn to develop healthier and more mature romantic relationships. This present study thus aimed to: (1) understand how emerging adults from divorced families view romantic relationships and (2) learn about the experiences of emerging adults from divorced families in maintaining romantic relationships.

Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with interpretative phenomenological analysis or IPA. The IPA approach seeks to understand how a phenomenon is interpreted by certain people who have a significant life experience (Tindall, 2009).

The authors considered IPA as an appropriate approach to achieve the research objectives. Smith and Osborn (2015) also revealed that the IPA design can be useful for exploring complex, ambiguous, and emotional topics. Romantic relationships and parental divorce are concepts that involve some of these aspects. Phenomenological qualitative research methods can provide more in-depth and comprehensive insights and encourage participants to open up and share their experiences freely.

In addition, meaning-making plays a major role in determining how humans deal with certain situations. Different human beings can make meaning of the same things differently because they do so through the world around them, and individuals have life experiences that are different from one another. Therefore, the IPA approach allows us to identify patterns from different experiences and

meaning-makings, leading to a more comprehensive insight into the topic of this present study.

Participants

The authors used the purposive sampling method to select research participants. The selection of participants was based on homogeneous sampling, a sampling method that includes researchers selecting participants based on their membership in a particular group (Creswell, 1998). For this research, the criteria of the participants are emerging adults between the ages of 18-25 who have experienced parental divorce directly.

The research participants were five university students in Yogyakarta, including three main participants (KS, LA, and DF) and two significant others (LR and FM). The research participants were recruited through broadcast messages via social media messaging applications to the authors' networks. The message contained recruitment of research participants for research related to the topic of divorce. Interested individuals directly contacted the authors to express willingness to be participants for the research.

KS

KS is a 21-year-old woman currently studying at a public university in Yogyakarta. She is the eldest of two children in her family. Having separated in 2017, KS's biological parents officially divorced in 2018, when KS was still in her fourth semester. Her father married another woman six months after the divorce.

LA

LA is a 21-year-old woman currently studying at a public university in Yogyakarta. She lives in Yogyakarta with her father, stepmother, and stepsibling. LA's birth mother and father divorced when she was a baby. Later, her father married another woman and had one child with her. LA's extended family never told her the whereabouts of her birth mother. However, when LA was in elementary school, she began to get gifts from someone who claimed to be her biological mother, prompting her father to reveal the truth about the person who secretly gave her the gifts. With the help of a friend, when LA was in middle school, she finally managed to find the whereabouts of her biological mother.

DF

DF is a 20-year-old man currently pursuing an undergraduate education at a public university in Yogyakarta. DF lived in Yogyakarta with his parents and a sister seven years younger than him until he became a teenager. Throughout this period, DF witnessed frequent conflicts between his parents. His mother and father constantly came into conflicts that often escalated to physical violence.

DF's parents finally decided to divorce when DF was in junior high school. DF's parents divorced without prior notification either to him or his younger sibling. One day, his mother went to Jakarta, bringing his sibling with her, saying she wanted to visit DF's grandparents living there. However, when her mother and his younger sibling did not come home after leaving their home for more than a month, DF realized that his parents had separated.

Procedures

Before conducting the research, the authors first sought approval from the Ethical Research Committee in the Faculty of Psychology of Universitas Gadjah Mada, of which approval letter number 320/UN1/FPSi.1.3/SD/PT.01.01/2020 was obtained.

The authors started the research by conducting in-depth interviews with the participants. They built a rapport with the participants to make them feel freer in sharing their stories and not feel judged. After that, all participants were given an informed consent sheet. Although the participants had received the information about the research in writing, the authors thought it was necessary to explain it orally. The participants indicated their agreement with all the points stated in the informed consent by signing two copies of the consent form, one for the authors and one for them.

Each participant was interviewed twice and each significant other once. The interviews took between 30 and 100 minutes at locations determined by the participants. Next, member checking was accomplished through messages sent online. The interview transcripts and the results of the analysis were given back to each participant for checking. The participants were asked to tell the authors when they found incorrect information or if they thought the authors misunderstood the information they had shared. After that, the report was revised according to the participants' directions.

Instruments

Semi-structured open interviews were used to obtain the data required. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent. The authors adjusted the use of language to the participants' ability and understanding. The aspects revealed from the interviews included the participants' descriptions, family life, and experiences as well as meaning-making related to romantic relationships.

Analysis

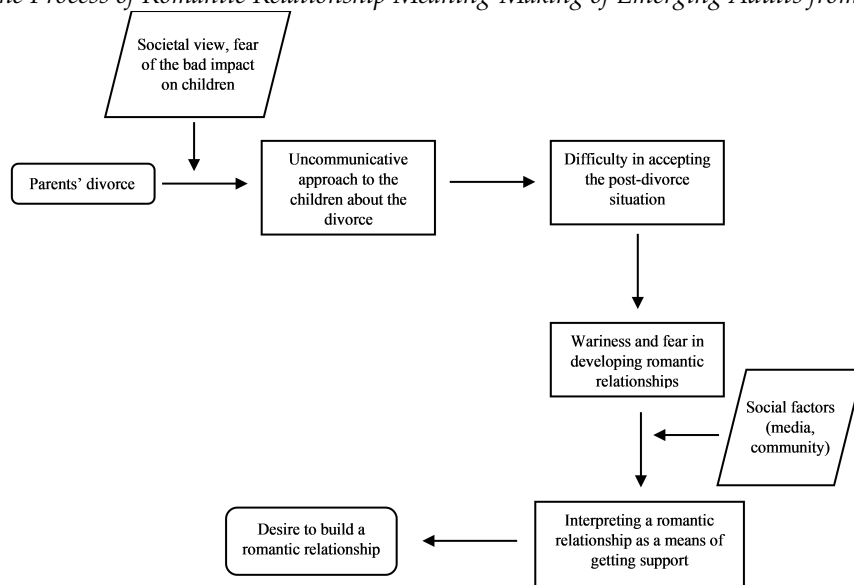
The data were analysed according to the IPA steps from Tindall (2009) to understand how participants make sense of romantic relationships in the context of parental divorce. First, the interview transcripts were compiled based on interview recordings in the form of a table by line in Microsoft Word. Then the documents were reread to learn about a participant's experiences more in-depth and understand their thinking and feeling. Next, the authors took notes of whatever was of interest to the authors from the interview transcript either by redescribing what the participant said or writing down personal reflections that emerged based on the participant's use of language. Then the authors looked for emergent themes from the recording and connections between these themes to bring up superordinate themes. Having completed this task, the authors continued analyzing the transcripts of other participants' interviews and looked for patterns between participants' responses.

Results

The results of the research data analysis revealed the participants' experiences regarding their parents' divorce. The main themes emerging in the participants' experiences included communication about the divorce and attitudes toward the divorce.

Figure 1

The Process of Romantic Relationship Meaning-Making of Emerging Adults from Divorced Families



Communication About The Divorce

The three participants' parents seemed to avoid giving explanations about their divorce to their children. Although KS's parents invited her and her younger sibling to discuss their divorce, they only revealed that they were in the process of divorce and had constant conflicts for twenty years before deciding to do so.

"One day, I and KY [KS's younger sibling] were invited to have a chat with them. Then they told us their marriage was already in trouble from the beginning ... What? I was shocked. Are they serious? What kind of drama have I been in all this time? I vividly remember they said 20 years. That was their 20th year of marriage, meaning that I was 19. Hah?" (W.01.KS.802-805, 807-810)

Meanwhile, LA and DF's parents never discussed their divorce at all. They let LA and DF figure out the divorce on their own.

"...I could find my birth mother because a friend told me about her... Then I tried to find her myself. When I finally could find her, I realized that my father was aware that I had been trying to find her for quite some time. My father initially denied that I am not a biological child of my mother [his new wife], but after a while, he was like, 'Yes, it is true. That woman [that you have found] is your biological mother.'" (W.01.LA.192-205)

"My mother... one day she said she would like to visit my grandparents [who lives in Jakarta]. She only

bought two [plane] tickets, for her and my little sister. She did not invite my father and me to go with her with the excuse that I still had school to go to and my sister still needed my mother close to her since she was still very young. She was supposed to come home a month after leaving, but she never did. There. The separation was not on good terms.” (W.01.DF.119-129)

Attitude Toward Parental Divorce

Each participant has a different attitude toward their parents' divorce. KS tries to accept the divorce of her parents despite the pain she is enduring by doing so. She has not gotten used to the changes following the divorce, including his father's marriage to another woman and having a half-brother.

“It's sad, so sad. But at that time, I was diplomatic, 'it's okay for you to separate if you're not happy,' but deep in my heart, I still feel sad, wishing that they would stay together, but how can I stand watching them fight all the time. I'm tired..” (W.01.KS.1045-1051)

On the other hand, LA still cannot accept her parents' divorce. She is still continuously comparing her situation with other people from intact families. She feels that she must always show an understanding and position herself as part of her family despite seeing herself as a victim of the divorce.

“Why did things go that way? Why should they divorce? Why do I have to experience this? I am the victim here. That's what I feel.” (W.01.LA.540-544)

Unlike KS and LA, DF revealed that he feels okay with the divorce happening to his parents. He does not consider his father and mother significant figures in his life. DF stated that his family life was always full of conflicts, preventing him from feeling parental love. He currently can support himself financially without the help of his parents.

“He once said...he doesn't need his parents that badly. He is also used to living alone, so being abandoned feels normal. That's why he doesn't think of his parents as significant figures. According to him, his grandparents are important to him, not his parents. He said, 'basically, I would be sadder when it's my grandparents that died rather than my parents.'” (W.01.SO.FM.858-598)

The results of the analysis also generated three themes describing how the three participants make sense of a romantic relationship, including seeing a romantic relationship as a means to get support, seeing it as a source of fear, and dealing with contradictory meanings.

A Means to Get Support

The three participants see romantic relationships as a means to get support because they perceive their parents as unreliable figures to provide consistent support. Therefore, they try to fulfil their needs for support through other close relationships, especially romantic relationships.

The three participants had different experiences to make meaning that romantic relationships can be a means to get support. KS makes meaning through the media they consume. Media such as movies, TV series, books, and videos on the internet lead her to form this particular idea of a romantic relationship.

"... I saw examples ... from YouTubers' vlogs, you know ... and there are couples whom I think ... set a good example." (W.02.KS.58-62)

Meanwhile, LA makes meaning through observing friends who already have a partner. She saw how they freely share problems with their partner and get support.

"... I saw my friends ... some of them have married ... it must feel good to have someone to confide in and share things with." (W.02.LA.391-395)

On the other hand, DF makes meaning from his own experience in romantic relationships. These experiences encourage the three participants to establish a romantic relationship.

"... for example, when I am dealing with some problem, I share it with her... It comforts me because I know where to go for help because of which I can do this, I can do that, that's it." (W.02.DF.1181-1186)

Source of Fear

While the three participants see romantic relationships as a means to get support, they also see them as a source of fear.

KS is very afraid of the presence of conflicts in her romantic relationship. She tries to deny the conflicts and assumes that they do not exist. She does so because she does not fully trust her partner and is not confident in her ability to sustain the relationship. It seems that KS's fear stems from her parents' divorce.

"... because what I saw from my mom and dad was that when they were not satisfied with something, they just left it unfinished ... I learned the moral of the story: when you are not happy with each other, then it's okay to walk out of the relationship instead of maintaining an unhappy relationship." (W.02.KS.373-379)

LA is afraid of possibly repeating the mistakes her parents made. Besides, she also fears that she could be hurt and might not be able to realize her ambitions if she is involved with someone. As a result, she is reluctant to be fully committed to a romantic relationship.

"I'm just afraid ... because my mom and dad's divorce was due to family intervention in their marriage. When you're married, you build a relationship with someone new, building a new family. I am afraid, so much, of parents-in-law ..." (W.01.LA.1125-1131)

Like LA, DF also fears that he will become like his parents, especially his strict father, who always imposes his will on his mother. Therefore, he tries to suppress his temperamental nature and adopts a more adaptive way of solving problems. In addition, DF is afraid of being disrespected by her partner's family because of his background as a child from a divorced family.

"... I am afraid of my temperamental character that could be dangerous when I suddenly lose control or something. But it is possibly not my biggest fear. Maybe ... It is how my partner's family would accept my family. That's what I always have in mind." (W.02.DF.720-730)

Dealing With Contradictory Meanings

The analysis results suggest that the three participants make contradictory meanings of romantic relationships, raising the question of how they behave in romantic relationships.

KS and DF still want to continue the romantic relationship where they are currently involved.

KS revealed that although she still has some distrust and fear toward her partner, she still wants to continue the relationship because she feels that her partner, AF, supports her in every step she makes. She revealed that the support from AF can build her confidence to become a better person.

"It's because he always supports me. Without his support, I would not believe in myself, I think." (W.02.KS.487-489)

Likewise, DF revealed that he feels happier when he is with FM, his partner. Before establishing a relationship with FM, DF was in a pretty bad situation. He often woke up in the middle of the night and cried without realizing it. The presence of FM, who is always willing to listen to him and show understanding and support, makes DF rise from adversity and feel happy again.

"When I got to the point where I felt a bonding between me and FM, I began to share things with her. One day, I suddenly experienced a comfortable feeling I had never had before. It could be part of the dynamics of a true romantic relationship". (W.01.DF.906-912)

Unlike KS and DF, LA still has a great fear of romantic relationships even though she also sees them as a means to get support. LA tries to avoid romantic relationships through various means, by limiting relationships with men, for example. She also prefers to focus on other aspects of her life, such as pursuing an education and a career. However, despite this avoidance behaviour, she still desires a romantic relationship deep in her heart.

"Maybe I would, but ... yes, it's our nature as humans to have a life partner. And ... maybe ... I need someone who can convince me ... like ... that I won't end up like that [divorced]" (W.01.LA.1024-1029)

Discussion

The results showed an interesting pattern in how the three participants define romantic relationships and how their experiences play a role in this. They have two ways of making sense of romantic relationships: seeing them as a means of getting support and a source of fear.

It seems likely that the three participants' views are influenced by how their parents communicated about their divorce. The three participants' parents seemed to avoid talking openly about their divorce to their children. Research suggests that open communication between parents and children regarding divorce can help children better understand and accept their parents' divorce and the resulting changes (Morrison et al., 2017). On the other hand, uncommunicative parents who avoid discussing their divorce leave their children confused and feel they cannot rely on their parents to support them in such a difficult situation.

It is likely that the parents of all three participants avoid talking about their divorce because culture plays a role in this. Marriage is something sacred and must be adhered to in Indonesia, so divorce is considered something that is not good (Gunawan & Nurwati, 2019). On the other hand, parents also experience difficulties due to the assumption that divorce can be harmful to children. Parents also believe they can reduce this impact by keeping secrets about their divorce (Cohen et al., 2014).

The three participants see romantic relationships as a means of getting support because they

do not see their parents as figures who can provide it. This finding is in line with the behavioural systems approach. (Furman and Wehner as cited in (Berger et al., 2005)) state that close relationships have four functions, namely (1) affiliation; closeness, and intimacy, (2) sexual or reproductive needs, (3) attachment; physical and emotional security, and (4) care-giving; providing support and protection. Any close relationship, including family, friends, or partners, can fulfil these four functions. Interestingly, a particular individual experience can trigger some changes, which, in turn, determine which close relationship will serve these functions (Berger et al., 2005; Furman & Buhrmester, 2009). In the case of the three participants, the function of parents as figures who provide closeness, emotional security, and support is transferred to the partner.

In addition, the three participants follow figures other than parents who model that a romantic relationship can be a means to get support; For example, KS takes some examples from the entertainment media that she consumes, LA from her friends' experiences, and DF from his experience with his romantic partner FM. This finding is consistent with Bandura (1997) theory of enactive mastery experience and vicarious experience. Through enactive mastery experience, individuals can directly learn and evaluate their ability to do something. On the other hand, a vicarious experience provides an opportunity for individuals to identify themselves with a "model": the more individuals identify with the model, the more likely they can learn some behaviour well.

The three participants also see romantic relationships as a source of fear. According to Bryant and Conger (2002), the environment where parenting provided to individuals as children has a significant role in influencing their thoughts and feelings about romantic relationships as emerging adults through observational learning, namely by observing interactions between family members and sibling/parent socialization hypothesis, namely experiences directly related to interactions with family members.

The three participants had experiences in conflict-ridden families affecting their mindsets and behaviours in their romantic relationships. The behaviour of KS and LA is consistent with the results of research conducted by Cui and Fincham (2010) that found parental divorce can develop negative understandings of romantic relationships and positive perceptions of divorce as children become adults. On the other hand, the behaviour of DF shows the opposite. He tries not to repeat the conflict management behaviour of his parents. This behaviour is in line with the result of research conducted by South (2013) that emerging adults from divorced families will learn from their parents' mistakes and try harder to keep their romantic relationships intact.

The analysis results showed that the three participants make contradictory meanings of romantic relationships. They see a romantic relationship as something positive and negative at the same time.

However, two of the three participants, KS and DF, still have the desire to establish a romantic relationship. LA also acknowledged the need to have a partner someday because she is aware that humans are social creatures needing relationships with other people to survive, including romantic relationships.

Some literature suggests that humans have a basic need for love. For example, (Maslow as cited in (Ewen, 2010)) places love in the hierarchy of human needs. Burunat (2019) even argues that love is one of the physiological motivations besides hunger, thirst, and sleep because love has a critical role in the survival of human life by allowing individuals to gain affection, support, closeness, and a sense of happiness.

On the other hand, emotions also affect how the three participants behave in romantic relationships. The love and happiness the participants get from their romantic partners can help them overcome their fear of being involved in a romantic relationship. For example, KS and DF choose to fight the emotion of fear to sustain their romantic relationship. They can manage to do so because they have other stimuli that can help them, namely support and commitment from their partners. Unlike KS and DF, the emotion of fear still haunts LA whenever she is thinking about romantic relationships, probably because of no prior exposure to other stimuli that can help her fight this particular emotion.

In addition, the human agency also seems to play a role in how the three participants manage contradictory meanings. This finding is consistent with the theory of enactive mastery (Bandura, 1997) asserts that human agency is the humans' ability to control their behaviour to produce satisfying consequences. The three participants display behaviour that shows human agency. For example, DF thinks he inherits his father's temperamental trait. However, he chooses to control this trait to sustain the romantic relationship that can provide him with the support he never got from his parents.

What happens to DF is also true for KS. His desire for support and a sense of kinship overpowers her fear. KS feels that AF gives the support she needs, allowing her to develop a stronger self-confidence. She believes that her trust in AF and herself will grow with time.

On the other hand, LA takes charge of her life differently. The divorce of her biological parents, the constant conflicts between her father and mother, and her observations of romantic relationships in her environment make LA feel afraid and insecure about romantic relationships. Therefore, she develops ambitions and goals to prove herself capable in areas other than romantic relationships, such as education and career. LA also tries to regulate her behaviour to achieve these goals.

Conclusion

This study reveals that experiences related to parental divorce can both positively and negatively influence how the three participants make meaning of romantic relationships. All three participants' parents avoided communicating about their divorce to their children, making the three participants face adverse experiences and develop contradictory meanings about romantic relationships.

However, the adverse experiences associated with parental divorce did not limit the three participants from getting positive things in their lives, mainly because, as humans, they have human agency and a need for love. It seems that parental divorce does not necessarily have unfortunate effects only on how they interpret romantic relationships, which is evident in their ability to determine how that meaning then governs their lives in the future.

The findings of this study can enrich knowledge about the psychological dynamics of

emerging adults from divorced families. An understanding of these dynamics can assist psychology professionals in developing appropriate interventions for adults who have experienced or are experiencing parental divorce, especially in developing effective methods for dealing with fear and resolving conflicts with partners. In addition, the findings of this study can be a reference for divorced parents to build open communication, show positive interactions, and minimize exposing their children to negative interactions.

Recommendations

Further research is needed to broaden the understanding of how parental divorce plays a role in emerging adult life, especially in interpreting romantic relationships. Future research can explore the meaning of romantic relationships for emerging adults from conflictual but not divorced families or those who come from divorced families with positive communication between the parents.

Declarations

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the participants and every party involved in the research process.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Authors' Contribution

CAD was the main contributor to the research, from designing the study, reviewing the literature, collecting and analyzing the data, reporting the result, and writing the manuscript. NUH served as supervisor, providing guidance and advice related to the research design, data analysis, and interpretation as well as the development of the manuscript

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the contents of this manuscript.

Orcid ID

Carissa Azarine Delicia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8765-2711>

Nida Ul Hasanat  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8409-6278>

References

- Allen, K., & Mitchell, S. (2015). Perceptions of parental intimate relationships and their affects on the experience of romantic relationship development among african american emerging adults. *Marriage & Family Review, 51*(6), 516–543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2015.1038409>

- Amalia, S. T., & Cahyanti, I. Y. (2021). Gambaran resiliensi pada individu dewasa awal terhadap situasi skibat perceraian orangtua [the illustration of resiliency in early adult individual towards situation after parents' divorce]. *Buletin Riset Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental (BRPKM)*, 1(1), 268–279. <https://doi.org/10.20473/brpkm.v1i1.24754>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman; Company.
- Berger, L., McMakin, D., & Furman, W. (2005). The language of love: Romantic relationships in adolescence. In A. Williams & C. Thurlow (Eds.), *Talking adolescence: Perspectives on communication in the teenage years* (pp. 129–146). Peter Lang Publishing.
- Bryant, C. M., & Conger, R. D. (2002). *An intergenerational model of romantic relationship development* (A. L. Vangelisti, H. T. Reis, & M. A. Fitzpatrick, Eds.; 1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511499876.005>
- Burunat, E. (2019). Love is a physiological motivation (like hunger, thirst, sleep or sex). *Medical Hypotheses*, 129. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2019.05.011>
- Candow, D. G., & Chilibeck, P. D. (2005). Differences in size, strength, and power of upper and lower body muscle groups in young and older men. *The journals of gerontology series A: Biological sciences and medical sciences*, 60(2), 148–156. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/60.2.148>
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Statistik indonesia 2022 [statistics of indonesia 2022]*.
- Chui, W. H., & Wong, M. Y. H. (2016). Association between parents' marital status and the development of purpose, hope, and self-esteem in adolescents in Hong Kong. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(6), 820–838. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/DOI:10.1177/0192513X15606490>
- Cohen, O., Leichtentritt, R. D., & Volpin, N. (2014). Divorced mothers' self-perception of their divorce-related communication with their children: Mothers tell. *Child & Family Social Work*, 19(1), 34–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00878.x>
- Collibee, C., & Furman, W. (2015). Quality counts: Developmental shifts in associations between romantic relationship qualities and psychosocial adjustment. *Child Development*, 86(5), 1639–1652. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12403>
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage Publications.
- Cui, M., & Fincham, F. D. (2010). The differential effects of parental divorce and marital conflict on young adult romantic relationships. *Pers. Relatsh*, 17(3), 331–343.
- Cui, M., Fincham, F. D., & Durtschi, J. A. (2011). The effect of parental divorce on young adults' romantic relationship dissolution: What makes a difference? *Personal Relationships*, 18(3), 410–426. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01306.x>
- Dariyo, A. (2004). Memahami psikologi perceraian dalam kehidupan keluarga [understanding the psychology of divorce in family life]. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 2(2), 94–100.
- Dinero, R. E., Conger, R. D., Shaver, P. R., Widaman, K. F., & Larsen-Rife, D. (2008). Influence of family of origin and adult romantic partners on romantic attachment security. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(4), 622–632. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012506>
- Ewen, R. B. (2010). *An introduction to theories of personality* (7th ed.). Psychology Press.

- Furman, W., & Buhrmester, D. (2009). Methods and measures: The network of relationships inventory: Behavioral systems version. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 33(5), 470–478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025409342634>
- Gunawan, N. A., & Nurwati, N. (2019). Persepsi masyarakat pada perceraian [public perception of divorce]. *Share: Social Work Journal*, 9(1), 20.
- Hayashi, G. M., & Strickland, B. R. (1998). Long-term effects of parental divorce on love relationships: Divorce as attachment disruption. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(1), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407598151002>
- Kansky, J., & Allen, J. P. (2018). Long-term risks and possible benefits associated with late adolescent romantic relationship quality. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47(7), 1531–1544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0813-x>
- Kirana, A. M., & Suprapti, V. (2021). Psychological well being dewasa awal yang mengalami riwayat perceraian orang tua di masa remaja. *Buletin Riset Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental (BRPKM)*, 1(1), 1003–1014. <https://doi.org/10.20473/brpkm.v1i1.27695>
- Masarik, A. S., Conger, R. D., Martin, M. J., Donnellan, M. B., Masyn, K. E., & Lorenz, F. O. (2013). Romantic relationships in early adulthood: Influences of family, personality, and relationship cognitions. *Personal Relationships*, 20(2), 356–373.
- Mohi, G. (2015). Positive outcomes of divorce: A multi-method study on the effects of parental divorce on children. *The University of Florida Undergraduate Research Journal*, 7(2), 49–62.
- Morrison, S. C., Fife, S. T., & Hertlein, K. M. (2017). Mechanisms behind prolonged effects of parental divorce: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 58(1), 44–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2016.1262652>
- Ozen, D. S. (2004). The impact of interparental divorce on adult attachment styles and perceived parenting styles of adolescents: Study in turkey. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 40(1-2), 129–149. https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v40n01_09
- Purwanto, M. D., & Hendriyani, R. (2020). Tumbuh dari luka: Gambaran post-traumatic growth pada dewasa awal pasca perceraian orang tua [grow from pain: The illustration of post-traumatic growth in early adulthood after parents' divorce]. *Intuisi : Jurnal Psikologi Ilmiah*, 12(2). <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/INTUISI/article/view/24697>
- Sassler, S., Cunningham, A., & Lichter, D. T. (2009). Intergenerational patterns of union formation and relationship quality. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30(6), 757–786. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x09331580>
- Shanoora, A., Hamsan, H. H., Abdullah, H., & Mohd. Khir, A. (2020). Which is worse; divorce or conflict? parental divorce, interparental conflict, and its impact on romantic relationship quality of young dating adults in the maldives. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(15), Pages 325–339. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i15/8253>

- Shulman, S., & Connolly, J. (2013). The challenge of romantic relationships in emerging adulthood: Reconceptualization of the field. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*(1), 27–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696812467330>
- Sinnott, J. D. (2003). *Postformal thought and adult development: Living in balance* (J. Demick & C. Andreoletti, Eds.). Kluwer Academic Plenum Publishers.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain, 9*(1), 41–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2049463714541642>
- South, A. L. (2013). Perceptions of romantic relationships in adult children of divorce. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 54*(2), 126–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2012.755032>
- Thompson, R. A., & Goodvin, R. (2007). Taming the tempest in the teapot: Emotion regulation in toddlers. In C. A. Brownell & C. B. Kopp (Eds.), *Socioemotional development in toddlers*. Guilford.
- Tindall, L. (2009). J.a. smith, p. flower and m. larkin (2009),interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 6*(4), 346–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780880903340091>