Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents Experiencing Parent-lessness: Challenges, Resilience, and Adaptation

Stephanie Magdalena M.*, Arthur Huwae
Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana Salatiga, Indonesia
stephaniemagdalena15@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: Adolescents who experience parent-lessness face numerous challenges that may negatively affect their mental health. This study aims to describe the psychological well-being profile of adolescents who experience parent-lessness. The research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive phenomenological design. A total of five participants, two male and three female adolescents who experienced parent-lessness, were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews the lasted between 31 and 53 minutes. The participants were male and female adolescents aged 18-21 years who experienced parental neglect. They came from divorced families, foster families, lived separately from their parents, or lacked parental presence both physically and emotionally. The themes that emerged from the six dimensions of psychological growth included new experiences that shape the self, openness, self-understanding, and awareness of personal potential. Strong feelings of inferiority and uncertainty about the future were also reported by the participants. The findings indicate that adolescents who experience parent-lessness tend to have lower levels of psychological well-being. This condition contributes to a lack of trust in others, particularly toward individuals who have caused them emotional pain. Nevertheless, some participants continued to believe that their parents simply did not know how to express affection. The implications of this study suggest that there are limitations that provide opportunities for further development and a more in-depth exploration of the psychological well-being of parentless adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Fulfilling the role of a parentless adolescent is not an easy task, as it involves complex life dynamics that are highly demanding and carry a substantial risk of triggering mental health problems. In line with this, Ko et al. (2015) revealed that family conflict frequently occurs, and adolescents who do not live with their parents are at a higher risk. Research by Russell et al. (2020) demonstrated that adolescent stress is associated with increased parent–child conflict and diminished relational closeness. Parental focus on smartphones may interfere with sensitivity to adolescents' needs, thereby negatively affecting attachment and developmental outcomes (Kildare & Middlemiss, 2017). Family dysfunction is also significantly associated with increased levels of psychopathology.

These outcomes include delinquency and aggressive behaviors, heightened symptoms of depression and anxiety, and lower levels of well-being among adolescents. Several studies support these findings (Lawrence, Merrin, & Mcfield, 2022; Liu, Yang, Hu, Zhang, & Nie, 2020; Nie, Tian, & Huebner, 2020; Wang, Tian, Guo, & Huebner, 2020; Yusuf, Daud, & Arshat, 2021). Additionally, other studies indicate that adolescents who experience parental rejection and excessive control tend to exhibit higher levels of problematic gaming behavior (Chen, Lee, Dong, Gamble, & Feng, 2020).

Research conducted by Berliana (2019) showed that 16,189 children, or approximately 22.2%, had experienced parent-lessness. The study also revealed that nearly 50% of households (n = 20,983) contributed to neglect involving more than one child. These findings are reinforced by the study of Paramita and Faradiba (2020), which identified emotional neglect as one of the most prevalent forms of violence against individuals. The primary cause of emotional neglect often lies in the lack of emotional support from parents (Müller et al., 2020). Such impacts may eventually result in the loss of support, particularly within the context of divorce. Joyce (2016) emphasized that divorce is classified as a high-conflict situation, commonly referred to as high-conflict divorce, which may contribute to emotional neglect. Many individuals experience profound grief and confusion, which can affect their emotional and social development (Munawarsyah, 2025).

Research by Ifdil et al. (2020) indicated that parental disharmony within broken-home families can create unfavorable conditions and negatively affect adolescents' psychological well-being. Adolescents from broken-home families often experience severe psychological consequences, such as anger, fear, emotional distress, and feelings of guilt (Sari, 2020).

A mid-2023 survey conducted by Hamibawani (2024) revealed that among 58 private junior high school students in Malang City from non-intact families, many experienced poor psychological well-being. Interviews with students uncovered difficulties in forgiving and accepting their circumstances, with some reporting experiences of bullying related to their family background. Some students engaged in self-harming behaviors and school truancy. School counselors reported that these students were also involved in negative behaviors, such as smoking and difficulties in emotional regulation, which in some cases led to incidents of peer aggression. Therefore, psychological well-being among adolescents from broken-home families is crucial in supporting psychological health and overall well-being (Pradana, 2023).

Psychological well-being is a concept that reflects individuals' daily emotional experiences and how they interpret and express their lived experiences (Ryff, 2018). Consequently, parental involvement is essential, as parents serve as primary educators for adolescents. Parents function not only as instructors but also as role models whose behaviors are often imitated by adolescents. Parents hold a critical position in supporting children's education; however, some parents are insufficiently involved or fail to provide adequate attention to adolescents' educational needs (Aini, 2023). Moreover, individuals vary in their learning capacities and abilities to follow academic material. Finally, establishing a cooperative and supportive relationship with children is also of great importance (Liliwati, 2020).

To support the phenomenon examined in this study, preliminary data collection was conducted. The preliminary study employed initial interviews with three female adolescent informants who had experienced parent-lessness from both parents since April 2025. The interview results indicated that all participants experienced poor psychological well-being in relation to their parents. Poor psychological well-being is commonly observed among individuals from broken-home families and is often attributed to feelings of jealousy and a lack of affection. These adolescents carry unresolved childhood trauma, which contributes to feelings of losing parental figures and experiencing inadequate communication. This condition leads to distrust toward others, particularly those who have caused emotional pain. Nevertheless, many parentless adolescents continue to believe that their parents simply did not know the appropriate way to express affection.

Adolescents who experience parent-lessness undoubtedly face significant challenges, as they exist in highly stressful circumstances (Pratama et al., 2016). They must adapt to their surrounding environment while coping with changes within themselves and their lives (Aziz, 2015). The impact of parental separation results in non-intact family conditions, which subsequently influence adolescents' psychological well-being. This is evident in the tendency for parentless adolescents to exhibit lower levels of psychological well-being. Among the many threats present in today's world, unhealthy lifestyles, family instability, armed conflict, and environmental degradation are factors that significantly affect adolescent well-being (Patton et al., 2016).

Emotional development is also associated with changes in emotional functioning, such as emotion regulation, impulse control, and social relationships (Susanti, 2018). Adolescents who experience parent-lessness encounter challenges in communicating with others, problem-solving, and emotional expression, and are more likely to develop negative self-perceptions or feelings of inferiority compared to others (Irani & Laksana, 2018).

Psychological well-being issues among parentless adolescents have been identified as indicators of an individual's mental state, reflecting their ability to function effectively and experience life positively. Numerous studies have examined factors influencing psychological well-being, including age, gender, and cultural background (Ramadhani et al., 2016); marital status, education, economic conditions, and income (Huppert, 2009); social support (Utami in Hardjo & Novita, 2015); self-esteem levels (Triwahyuningsih, 2017); and adolescents' control over external activities (Prabowo, 2016).

Poor psychological well-being may have adverse implications for future health outcomes, such as depression (Yasmin et al., 2015). Psychological problems, including internalizing and externalizing disorders, are more likely to emerge among adolescents when parent–child relationship quality is low or characterized by high conflict (Stroud et al., 2015). This is closely related to the level of support provided to adolescents. According to Budiman (2022), disharmonious family conditions may place individuals at heightened risk for psychological disorders. Merrilees et al. (2018) further stated that adolescents' emotional states, including feelings of sadness and happiness, are influenced by interactions with both mothers and fathers.

The family functions as a unit that maintains harmony and serves as a structured social system. Many families aspire to togetherness, unity, and conflict-free environments; however, not all families achieve these ideals, as disagreements and tensions frequently arise within family dynamics (Fauzia & Batubara, 2022). These conditions may affect the psychological well-being of adolescents whose parents are divorced, even though psychological well-being can enhance happiness, mental health, and personal development (Megawati & Herdiyanto, 2016). Furthermore, psychological well-being supports adolescents in cultivating positive emotions, life satisfaction, happiness, and in reducing depression and negative behaviors (Akhtar & Barlow, 2018).

The circumstances experienced by parentless adolescents highlight the necessity for research that explores their psychological well-being in greater depth. This study seeks to examine a phenomenon that continues to occur among adolescents, both physically and emotionally. Therefore, further investigation into the psychological well-being of parentless adolescents is essential to support their ability to manage emotions and stress more effectively.

Research Objective

This study aims to describe the psychological well-being profile of adolescents who experience parent-lessness.

METHODS

Design

The type of research employed in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive phenomenological design. A qualitative approach was selected to obtain in-depth data through interview methods. Phenomenology can be understood as a research strategy that enables researchers to identify the essence of human experiences related to a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2023). In this process, researchers temporarily set aside their personal experiences to fully understand the lived experiences of the participants under investigation (Creswell, 2023). In this study, the descriptive phenomenological qualitative design was intended to provide a detailed and in-depth examination of the psychological well-being profile of adolescents who experience parent-lessness.

The interviews were developed based on Ryff's (2014) theory of psychological well-being dimensions and were organized into an interview guide to serve as a framework for data collection. These dimensions include self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy, viewed in relation to influencing factors such as age, gender, and cultural differences. The interview questions were designed using an epoche approach, allowing participants the freedom to express their lived experiences openly. Additional instruments used in this study included a mobile phone for audio recording and documentation, as well as writing materials for note-taking and documenting all information obtained from the participants.

Research Participants

The participants required for this study were adolescents aged 18–21 years who lived separately from their parents or who lacked parental presence, either physically or emotionally (see Table 1).

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant Classification	Notes	N
Gender	Male	2
	Female	3
	Total	5
Current Age	19-20	2
	21-22	3
	Total	5
Ethnicity	Maluku	1
	Sundanese	1
	Manado	2
	Balinese	1
	Total	5
Age at the MB	Elementary Scholl	5

Note: Age at MB = The participant's age at the time they became aware of their parentless status; N = Number of participants.

Research Procedure

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Approval No. E.6.m/331/KE-FPsi-UMM/VI/2025), to ensure the protection of research participants from ethical and moral violations. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, with recruitment proceeding from one participant to another. Procedure participants were provided with detailed information regarding

the study and voluntarily indicated their willingness to participate by signing an informed consent form.

Data Collection

Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which lasted between 31 and 53 minutes. The semi-structured interview format was characterized using open-ended questions while maintaining predefined thematic boundaries and an organized flow of discussion. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable, without providing any reason. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were given a token of appreciation as acknowledgment of their willingness to take part in the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

Initially, this stage involved the processes of summarizing, selecting, and sorting various forms of data obtained from the field in order to organize them into a written format ready for analysis. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (as cited in Sugiyono, 2019), which includes several interconnected steps. After all the collected data were organized into a manuscript, the next step involved data display. The final step in the Miles and Huberman analytical procedure is drawing conclusions and making decisions. These conclusions were guided by the previously formulated research questions (Miles & Huberman, as cited in Sugiyono, 2019). In addition, the researcher conducted careful and continuous observation to identify emerging themes. Data triangulation was performed by cross-checking information from multiple sources using different methods and time frames. Furthermore, the researcher sought data that were inconsistent or contradictory to the existing findings, a process referred to as negative case analysis. Finally, supporting reference materials were used to strengthen the identified findings, and member checking was conducted with participants to assess the extent to which the data accurately reflected their experiences and statements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Background of Individuals Experiencing Being Parentless

Each participant had distinct reasons and personal narratives related to their experiences of neglect, which constituted difficult challenges and posed a high risk to mental health. Overall, the participants in this study shared similar conditions in their experiences of parent-lessness. All participants reported distant relationships with both their fathers and mothers. Participant "S" experienced maternal abandonment from an early age. Feelings of disappointment and sadness frequently accompanied this experience, particularly when reflecting on others' perceptions and potential judgments of their situation. Internal conflicts often emerged, making life feel increasingly burdensome. Although the participant still had a father, his presence was limited due to work outside the city, resulting in an emotionally distant relationship. Daily life did not unfold as hoped, and a persistent sense of loss became part of everyday experience. Participant "D" often felt hesitant to share personal experiences when interacting with peers who came from harmonious families. Participant "O" reported experiencing a lack of attention from both parents during childhood, especially from the mother. The mother left the home at an early stage of the participant's life, while the father frequently travelled out of town for work, leading to frequent feelings of loneliness. Participant "H" often experienced feelings of envy when observing peers who had harmonious family relationships. This envy was accompanied by persistent questions about why others were able to experience happiness that felt inaccessible to them. Meanwhile, participant "J" lived with the paternal extended family, in a context where one parent had remarried.

Dynamics of Parent-lessness Experienced by Adolescents

According to research conducted by Steiner and Pillemer (2018), coherent life narratives are constructed by adolescents during early developmental stages, encompassing the maintenance and development of self-concept as well as information regarding the influence of family and environmental contexts. Self-concept is a critical component in the formation of adolescent identity throughout the developmental period. The following section presents each participant's experiences across the dimensions of psychological well-being as conceptualized by Ryff (2014).

Self-Understanding

Each participant described their self-understanding differently from one another. Participants S, D, O, H, and J perceived themselves as distinct individuals, each with unique perspectives and lived experiences, such as feeling "confused" (S), "seeking attention" (D), and "having difficulty making friends" (O). In contrast, participant H described their self-understanding as having undergone a drastic change over time.

> "…Oh, to describe myself, maybe as someone who, umm, how should I say
> it? Someone who changed drastically from being very talkative at first to now
> not really being that way. Umm, it's hard to blend in…" (H, pp. 42-45).

Meanwhile, participant J demonstrated a higher level of empathy, although this characteristic sometimes led to emotional vulnerability.

> "…I'm a very sensitive person. When people talk about me or scold me, I take
> it to heart; I'm quite sensitive. I also find it very difficult to express what I
> want to say, and I can be stubborn as well…" (J, pp. 30-32).

Despite these differences, participants S, D, O, H, and J exhibited elements of self-acceptance, characterized by continuing to live their lives as usual and maintaining an attitude of enjoyment. They expressed the belief that past experiences should remain in the past and not be continuously revisited.

> "…No, not really. I just live my life as it is, enjoy it. As long as we have a job,
> we just go on with life…" (J, pp. 63-64).

Another aspect of self-acceptance involved understanding that, despite experiencing loneliness or difficulties in social interaction, individuals remain valuable and possess the potential for personal growth.

> "…Okay, maybe at first the effect of being parentless made me feel
> unmotivated to socialize. So, I stayed quiet, did everything alone, cried alone,
> everything was alone. Because of that, I became reluctant to socialize…"
> (H, pp. 55-57).

Parent-lessness Contributes to Difficulties in Self-Acceptance

Participant D recognized that life has not always been easy and frequently reported feelings of disappointment. The experience of parent-lessness contributed to reduced self-confidence and difficulties in expressing affection. As illustrated in the participant's account.

> "…I became someone who lacks confidence, really lacks confidence. Back
> then, I wasn't confident at all and didn't know how to feel or express
> affection. I couldn't express affection because my parents were separated,
> so that's how it was…" (O, pp. 38-45)

In contrast, participant J perceived that they did not experience neglect from others. They believed that support and attention from people around them remained present, despite the life challenges they faced.

> *"…As for neglect, no, not really nothing like that from others…"* (J, pp. 37-40)

Accepting the Self in the Context of Parental Neglect

Participant D recognized that their life journey has not always been smooth and has at times been marked by feelings of disappointment. Although the participant felt neglected by parents who were preoccupied with their own responsibilities, they demonstrated an understanding that every individual face personal challenges.

> *"…Maybe when I failed to continue my studies, that made me feel like there was something wrong with me. I couldn't accept myself and kept blaming myself. Why did I have to be the one experiencing this, even though I have parents, but they couldn't help my situation because they were busy with their own matters? And when I entered the workforce, I really did everything on my own without any help from anyone, and once I started working, I was required to contribute to meeting household needs..."* (D, pp. 82-89)

Regarding self-acceptance, participant S had attempted to accept their circumstances; however, they often felt confused and emotionally distressed due to their parents' separation and their limited understanding of the reasons behind it.

> *"…As for my self-acceptance, well… I try to accept it. Because I don't really know why my parents separated. And being abandoned feels like something I can't fully accept at all-why did I have to exist in a family where I was neglected by both my father and my mother?..."* (S, pp. 69-73)

For participant D, the process of self-acceptance was complex following experiences of parental neglect. Initially, feelings of guilt and confusion dominated their thoughts, accompanied by persistent self-questioning about personal fault and the burden of emotional suffering.

> *"…When I was neglected, I used to constantly think about it, where I went wrong, and why I had to be the one experiencing all of this? But over time, I started to feel like, well, maybe this is just how the path is meant to be. So, my way of opening myself up to what happened with my parents is just trying to accept it..."* (D, pp. 151-155)

Participant D also expressed hope that society, particularly neighbours, would become more sensitive to the impact of their comments regarding family matters. They felt that discussions about perceived family failures, especially parental divorce, had a profound emotional effect on them as children directly involved in the situation.

> *"…My hope for society, especially neighbours, is that they become more aware, because what neighbours say about our family really affects us. For example, when they talk about the mistakes in our family or why our parents divorced, I think that's inappropriate to discuss, especially since they are outsiders, not part of our family..."* (D, pp. 239-244)

Recognizing Personal Potential After Experiencing Parent-lessness

Participant S felt trapped in uncertainty regarding their personal potential, experiencing profound feelings of inferiority and a belief that they did not possess meaningful abilities or strengths.

> *"…I feel like, in terms of my personal potential, I don't have any potential at all…"* (S, pp. 85-86)

Participant D faced challenges in the occupational domain, where they reported difficulties in identifying and developing their personal potential.

> *"…Hmm… maybe in the world of work I am still trying to explore my potential so that I can obtain a better position…"* (D, pp. 132-133)

In contrast, participant H expressed emotional distress when observing others share stories about the happiness within their families, which contributed to feelings of alienation and psychological pressure.

> *"…Honestly, until now I haven't found my potential. So, when I'm asked about my strengths or advantages, I feel confused…"* (H, pp. 81-82)

New Experiences

Participant S expressed their perspective on interpersonal relationships, which they perceived as often complex. They recognized that each individual holds different perspectives and expectations, which can influence how interactions affect one's sense of self.

> *"…Yes, it could be said that way. Sometimes, among people, everyone has their own perspectives. But sometimes, when you get too close to others, people say you shouldn't expect too much from them. Because in the end, we end up disappointing each other…"* (S, pp. 206–210)

Openness

Within the dynamic context of living as parentless adolescents, participants ascribed meanings such as *not wanting to return to the past*, *simply continuing with life*, *setting boundaries*, and *not knowing whom to rely on* (S & D), *persistent rumination* (D), as well as *becoming more mature*, *offering advice*, and *difficulty socializing* (O), as factors influencing their experiences of feeling neglected. Regarding self-acceptance, participant S described an ambivalent process of accepting their circumstances. Although they attempted to accept the situation, feelings of confusion and emotional distress persisted due to parental separation and abandonment.

> *"…As for my self-acceptance, well… I try to accept it. Because I don't really know why my parents separated. And when it comes to being abandoned, it feels like I can't accept it at all. Why did I have to exist in a family where I was neglected by both my father and my mother?..."* (S, pp. 69-73)

Participant S also expressed their struggle to navigate life despite having family members around them. They recognized that although parents and siblings were physically present, each was absorbed in their own life, which led to feelings of neglect and the need for self-reliance.

> *"…Of course, I try, because who else is going to look out for me besides myself? Because what I've thought from the past until now is that even though I have a family, I have siblings, I have a father and a mother, they all have their own lives…"* (S, pp. 113-116)

In addition, participants S, D, and H, who identified themselves as coming from less-than-ideal family environments, acknowledged that they could not compare themselves with peers who had intact families. They reported that friendships provided valuable perspectives, teaching them the importance of resilience in facing challenges and adversity.

"…For example, when I mingle with friends whose families are harmonious, and we gather in a certain environment, they talk about their harmonious home lives. I hesitate to share my story because I feel different. I've never been able to experience what my friends have, even something as simple as being woken up by my mother in the morning..." (D, pp. 68-74)

Participant H described lingering feelings of envy and questioning when comparing their experiences with those of peers who received familial affection and support.

"…Because whether I like it or not, it already happened. Even though at first, I didn't accept it, and even now, sometimes I still ask why others can receive that kind of treatment while I can't. It's more like envy. Why do they get that, and I don't? Why does it have to be me who experiences this?..."
(H, pp. 65-71)

On the other hand, participant O reported that a lack of parental attention led to feelings of living independently and insufficient emotional support. Despite experiencing neglect, they recognized that these experiences shaped them into a more mature individual who valued and respected others more deeply.

"…Since childhood, I felt like I didn't receive enough attention, especially from my parents, particularly my mother, because she left home and my father often worked out of town. So, I lived on my own. Over time, I became a better person, more respectful toward others, and more mature, because I felt neglected. That's all…" (O, pp. 59-63)

Feelings of neglect led participants S and O to become reluctant to be open and to socialize with others, perceiving relationship-building as emotionally exhausting. However, over time, they became aware that this attitude hindered their personal development.

"…I'm someone who dares to make new decisions, but I find it difficult to make friends, especially those who are truly on the same wavelength. I also struggle to express myself in long sentences and don't really blend in socially. I socialize mostly because of work demands. I'm also a bit impatient…"
(O, pp. 26-31)

When reflecting on their experiences of neglect, participant O expressed a desire to become a better person, particularly by developing the capacity to listen to others. They hoped to become a supportive listener who could offer advice when needed.

"…My hope is to become a better listener. If people want to share their stories, I want to be able to listen and give advice, because I once experienced being neglected by both of my parents…" (O, pp. 178-181)

Finally, participant S expressed a firm decision not to revisit the past to change their relationship with their parents, particularly their mother. They believed that after experiencing abandonment and neglect, there was no value in attempting to alter the relationship.

"…If I could go back to the past and change my relationship with my parents, I wouldn't want to at all, especially with my mother. In my opinion, once you've been neglected and abandoned, that's it. Just leave and don't come back for any reason…" (S, pp. 266-270)

Establishing Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

In their lived experience as an individual who has grown up in a parentless context, participant S reported having a strained relationship with their parents from early childhood to the present. Feelings of profound disappointment toward their parents have persisted over time, shaping their perception of family relationships.

> *"…If I were to describe my relationship with my parents, it has never really been good, from when I was a child until now. I honestly do not know how to relate to my family because what I feel most strongly is deep disappointment toward my parents…"* (S, pp. 30-34)

In contrast, participant J perceived their relationship with their parents as generally adequate; however, the relationship lacked closeness and emotional intensity. Although communication was present, it was described as limited and inconsistent, particularly with the father, while communication with the mother was perceived as insufficient in terms of emotional depth.

> *"…With my parents, the relationship is generally fine, but not as good as it should be. It is okay, but not particularly close. Sometimes there are difficulties. So far, communication exists, but it is not intense, especially with my father. With my mother, the relationship is also fine, but the communication is not good in the sense that there is no consistent or deep interaction…"* (J, pp. 22-27)

Meanwhile, participants O and H reported receiving significant emotional support from peers and romantic partners. These relationships provided them with a safe space to share experiences and offered emotional distraction when family-related stressors became overwhelming. Similarly, participant D emphasized the importance of peer support, particularly during periods of loneliness, noting that friends played a crucial role in offering emotional reassurance and acceptance without judgment.

> *"…Within my circle of friends, I am very grateful because they help me a lot. For example, when I feel lonely or isolated, I have friends who understand and are very supportive. They always reassure me that everything will be okay, and they do not judge me based on my family background…"*
> (D, pp. 165-171)

Difficulty Trusting Others

In the process of developing interpersonal trust, participants D and O reported significant difficulties rooted in prior experiences of disappointment and emotional neglect. These experiences contributed to heightened caution and reluctance in forming trusting relationships. In contrast, participant J described a relatively higher level of trust toward others, particularly within their immediate social environment.

> *"…It is more about trusting other people, because in this environment, I tend to trust others more…"* (J, pp. 102–103)

For participant S, trusting others was perceived as particularly challenging. Experiences of abandonment within the family context led to pervasive doubt and scepticism toward people in their social surroundings. The participant expressed difficulty in assessing others' intentions, which further complicated the development of trust.

> *"…If you ask whether I have difficulty trusting people, yes. Even now, I find it very hard to trust others. The reason is that I see it from my own family if they could leave me, how about the people around me? It is not only about*

that, though. Sometimes, I just do not know what kind of person someone
really is…" (S, pp. 190–194)

Similarly, participant H reported challenges in trusting others, particularly in romantic relationships. This difficulty was closely associated with past experiences involving biological parents, which shaped the participant's beliefs about relational reliability and emotional safety.

"…Yes, it is difficult to trust, especially men. I am currently in a relationship,
but even so, I cannot fully trust my partner one hundred percent. Even though
he is my boyfriend, I still feel hesitant, because my principle is that if my
closest people, my biological parents, could do that, then anyone else could
do the same…" (H, pp. 157–162)

Experiences Shaping Life Purpose

Participant H emphasized the importance of caution and vigilance when forming relationships with men. The participant highlighted the need to avoid excessive trust, as intense emotional involvement may lead to self-harming consequences. The experience contributed to the development of a personal principle centered on emotional self-reliance and psychological preparedness.

"…It is more about not trusting men too easily. Do not be too naive, even
when we care deeply. We need to have something to hold on to for ourselves,
so that if something unwanted happens, we are still able to stand on our
own, even without others…" (H, pp. 181-186)

Similarly, participant J shared experiences of being subjected to negative labelling and social stigma, including being perceived as having no promising future. Rather than internalizing these judgments, the participant used these experiences as motivation to demonstrate personal capability and achieve success.

"…The experiences that shaped me until now came from being
underestimated in the past. People talked negatively about me. From those
experiences, I learned and became motivated to pursue my dreams, to be
successful, and to become a businessperson…" (J, pp. 122-129)

Participant S reflected on past experiences of parental absence, both emotionally and materially, which significantly shaped their current sense of self and life direction. Despite experiencing profound psychological distress in the past, the participant continued to strive toward higher education and employment using personal abilities and perseverance.

"…If I look back at the past, what shaped who I am now is how my parents
truly neglected me. They were not there at all. With what I am doing now, I
still do not really know what the future will look like…" (S, pp. 236-240)

Participant D viewed past experiences as valuable lessons in the formation of life goals. The participant recognized the importance of independence and self-motivation, particularly after experiencing disappointment from relying on others who were ultimately unable to provide support.

"…If I could return to the past, I would learn more, seek motivation, and gain
more experiences to achieve my goals. I would fix several things, especially
learning to live independently and not depend on anyone, because I reached
my lowest point when I depended on others and they could no longer help
me…" (D, pp. 193-200)

In contrast, participant O expressed no desire to return to the past and instead focused on future aspirations. The participant articulated a hope to build and maintain a healthy family in adulthood, shaped by reflections on earlier life experiences.

> *"…Honestly, I do not want to go back to the past. What has passed is in the past. Looking forward, maybe one day when I get married and have a small family, I want to take good care of it…"* (O, pp. 91-94)

Aspiring and Life Goals

Participant S expressed ongoing confusion and a lack of direction regarding personal aspirations. The participant described living life by simply following circumstances, without a clearly defined sense of purpose, which was influenced by perceived restrictions from family members.

> *"…Regarding my aspirations, I am still confused and feel lost. I live my life by just going with the flow, wherever it takes me. Honestly, I feel restrained by my sibling and my aunt…"* (S, pp. 287-290)

In contrast, participant D articulated a strong aspiration to build a harmonious and stable family in the future. Despite acknowledging that disagreements are a natural part of relationships, the participant emphasized the importance of shared goals and emotional safety within a family system.

> *"…Of went I have life goals. My goal is to create a good family, free from conflict, although every couple may face problems. I hope to meet the right partner, eeee…. someone who shares the same goal of building a harmonious family that can serve as a safe and comfortable place for children…"* (D, pp. 208-213)

Participant H identified financial independence as a primary life goal, emphasizing self-reliance and autonomy without dependence on others.

> *"…To become wealthy and be able to stand on my own without needing anyone else to live. I want to rely solely on myself…"* (H, pp. 198-199)

Similarly, participant O demonstrated strong enthusiasm and motivation toward future goals following experiences of parental absence. The participant emphasized aspirations related to health, family well-being, and financial achievement.

> *"…Living a healthy life, having a happy small family. My dream is to reach my first one billion before the age of 30…"* (O, pp. 98-99)

Finally, Participant J conveyed a relatively simple yet growth-oriented outlook on life, focusing on self-improvement and achievement. The participant expressed aspirations related to professional success and entrepreneurial endeavours.

> *"…My dream is to be successful. I want to be in business, maybe become a speedboat captain…"* (J, pp. 133-134)

Experiences Shaping Life Goals

Participant J emphasized the importance of social support and self-acceptance from the surrounding community as factors that can enhance psychological well-being. The participant highlighted the need for guidance and inclusion, particularly for individuals whose efforts are often misunderstood by society.

> *"…There needs to be more guidance and support, and people should not be*
> *excluded. Especially when society does not understand their efforts and*
> *instead focuses on mistakes that may not align with expectations…"*
> (J, pp. 142-144)

In contrast, participant S demonstrated an ambivalent stance toward social support. The participant perceived social support as inherently reciprocal, leading to a preference for independence, although the need for basic social interaction was still acknowledged.

> *"…I don't want it. Whatever form of support comes from the surrounding*
> *environment, I don't want it anymore. Not because I completely reject it, but*
> *because any support they give will eventually require something in return…"*
> (S, pp. 380-383)

Participant D underscored the importance of mutual respect and the protection of family privacy within the community, particularly among neighbours, to support the psychological well-being of children who experience parental divorce.

> *"…My hope for society, especially neighbours, is that they are more mindful.*
> *What neighbours say about our families has a strong impact. In my opinion,*
> *discussing family mistakes, such as why parents divorced, is inappropriate,*
> *especially when it comes from people outside the family…"* (D, pp. 241-245)

Similarly, participant O expressed a desire for the community to refrain from interfering in personal matters, reflecting confidence in personal coping and problem-solving abilities.

> *"…My hope for society is that they do not interfere in my personal matters,*
> *because I am capable of resolving my own problems…"* (O, pp. 111–113)

Finally, participant H highlighted the importance of societal wisdom and restraint in judging children. The participant expressed hope for a more supportive and protective social environment that fosters psychological well-being.

> *"…People should not speak carelessly. When a child behaves a certain way,*
> *the parents should not immediately assume it is because of them. These are*
> *not behaviors we choose, and judgments like that are unfair…"*
> (H, pp. 228–233)

Personal Values Influencing Experiences of Parental Neglect

Participant O expressed that the value of independence, developed since early childhood, shaped their ability to cope with parental neglect. This value manifested in personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and commitment to work.

> *"…My personal value is probably independence, because since childhood, I*
> *have always been on my own. That made me someone who can live*
> *independently, earn my own money, work, and take responsibility for my*
> *job…"* (O, pp. 116-119)

Participant H explained that adopting an attitude of emotional detachment toward situations perceived as uncontrollable became a personal value that helped them cope with neglect from their parents.

> *"…Values? I tend to be indifferent to certain things. So, if something happens,*
> *it feels more like, 'Well, what else can I do?' Especially regarding my parents.*
> *No crying, just let it be, acceptance…"* (H, pp. 239-242)

Participant J reported that patience served as a central personal value that supported coping with experiences of parental neglect.

> *"…Be patient, just be patient and get through it. That's all I can do..."*
> (J, pp. 148-149)

In contrast, participant S expressed confusion in identifying personal values, which contributed to feelings of being directionless when facing parental neglect.

> *"…I don't really know, because I'm confused about life and about myself. I feel very lost and don't even know what my personal values are. Whether I move forward or stay still, it feels wrong either way…"* (S, pp. 401-403)

Finally, participant D viewed respect for parental decisions as a core personal value in the context of parental divorce, holding the belief that the separation occurred for valid reasons.

> *"…My personal value regarding my parents' divorce is respecting their decision. I believe they separated for a reason..."* (D, pp. 225–258)

Learning to Be Independent

Participant S expressed the belief that despite experiencing parental neglect, they chose to continue living their life positively, with gratitude, avoiding conflict, and striving to do their best within their capabilities.

> *"…Well… how should I think about it… since I've already been abandoned… as I mentioned earlier, life keeps moving forward. We don't really know who to rely on, because in the end, we will live on our own..."* (S, p. 449)

Previously, participant D sought attention when experiencing neglect; however, over time, the participant adopted a more indifferent stance and focused on performing their best without expecting recognition.

> *"…In the past, I might have begged or questioned things, seeking attention when I felt neglected. But now, I've become more indifferent, in the sense that I've already shown my best..."* (D, pp. 269-272)

Meanwhile, participant O stated that they have come to appreciate others and life situations more as a result of their experiences.

> *"…I've become someone who respects others more, yes, more respectful toward people and situations..."* (O, pp. 140-141)

Participant J emphasized the importance of courage in living independently and making personal decisions.

> *"…Be brave enough to live independently. Don't be overly dependent; you have to be courageous in making decisions..."* (J, pp. 165-166)

Finally, Participant H highlighted the necessity of self-reliance, particularly after living away from home, which fostered the ability to manage challenges independently.

> *"…Whether we like it or not, we can't rely on others. Especially after moving away from home, you become more on your own. Even when you need help, who else will help you if not yourself?..."* (H, pp. 271-273)

Support from Others

Participant S reported that family conflicts frequently involved their older sibling and aunt. Despite these conflicts, family members continued to emphasize the importance of building a positive future, particularly because the participant and their sibling had been abandoned by both parents.

> *"…Yes, as I explained earlier regarding my sibling and my aunt. My aunt and my sibling sometimes directly tell me what I should or should not do, but they always say that many of our conflicts are also related to the broader family, such as my other aunts…"* (S, pp. 460-464)

Meanwhile, participant O described receiving external influence that encouraged independence, with others motivating the participant to stand on their own, be mindful of their circumstances, and grow into a resilient, successful individual.

> *"…The influence from others regarding my independence is that they always remind me that I am on my own, that I have to stand on my own feet, and therefore I must be mindful of my situation…"* (O, pp. 149-151)

In addition, Participant H experienced strong support from significant others, who consistently respected their decisions and provided encouragement to persevere during difficult periods.

> *"…They are very supportive. They always support my decisions. Even when I'm feeling down, they say it's okay, it's okay to cry now, but later you have to remember to get back up…"* (H, pp. 291-293)

Support from the surrounding social environment helped participant D feel valued and useful, which in turn restored their motivation.

> *"…Support from the people around me is very helpful. It makes me feel appreciated and makes me realize that I am actually useful, and that feeling is what motivates me again…"* (D, pp. 277-280)

Finally, participant J emphasized the importance of maintaining a future-oriented focus and refraining from dwelling on past experiences.

> *"…The point is to stay focused on moving forward. Don't keep looking back. Once you move forward, don't turn back…"* (J, pp. 181-182)

Factors Influencing Psychological Well-Being in Adolescents Experiencing Parent-lessness

According to Ryff and Singer (2008), factors influencing psychological well-being include age, gender, and cultural differences. Ryff conceptualized psychological well-being as a construct that is closely related to individuals' lived experiences. Accordingly, the factors influencing psychological well-being among adolescents are as follows.

Emotional Support Across Age

Participant S reported that emotional support from others was no longer perceived as a personal need, as previous attempts to seek such support had been unsuccessful.

> *"…The support I have now feels like something I no longer need, because even when I try to look for it, I do not receive it…"* (S, pp. 501-502)

Similarly, participant D expressed a desire for emotional support from both parents in the form of reduced conflict, as parental disputes continued to affect their emotional well-being as an adult child.

*"…My hope for emotional support from both of my parents is that they would
no longer fight. As their child, I am already an adult, and I hope they are also
more mature and able to focus on their own lives…"* (D, pp. 292-296)

Participant O perceived themselves as capable of being a good listener and offering advice to others, drawing on their personal experiences of parental neglect.

*"…My hope is to become someone who can be a good listener. When people
want to share their stories, I can listen and give advice, because I have
experienced being neglected by both parents…"* (O, pp. 178-181)

In contrast, Participant H described a growing acceptance of their family circumstances, although feelings of envy persisted when observing others with harmonious family relationships.

*"…At my current age, I feel like I am starting to accept my family condition,
but as I mentioned earlier, I still sometimes feel jealous when I see others and
their harmonious families…"* (H, pp. 304-306)

Finally, participant J expressed hopes that their future child and spouse would not experience the same circumstances they had faced, particularly growing up in a broken home and experiencing parental neglect.

*"…For my hopes going forward, I sincerely wish that my child and my wife
will not experience what I did with my parents. That they will not grow up in
a broken home or experience neglect…"* (J, pp. 201–204)

Experiencing the Impact of Parent-lessness

Participant J described feeling a degree of regret regarding past experiences but chose to continue moving forward. At their current developmental stage, they reported greater awareness of how parental neglect has profoundly influenced their patterns of thinking, attitudes, and approaches to life.

*"…I feel a little regret, but it has already happened, so I just move forward.
At my current age, I am more aware and can truly feel how parental neglect
has affected the way I think, behave, and face life…"* (J, pp. 208-211)

Participant D perceived themselves as becoming more mature and open to their social environment. However, they viewed marriage as intimidating, as witnessing frequent parental conflict during childhood generated fear that similar experiences might recur.

*"…As I grow older, I also become more open to the environments around me.
At my current age, many of my peers are already married, and this has
greatly influenced my way of thinking…"* (D, pp. 315-318)

Participant S reported that the impact of parental neglect rendered life emotionally exhausting and filled with ongoing struggles. Feelings of fatigue, loss of direction, and the absence of a supportive outlet resulted in emotional burdens being carried alone.

*"…At my current age, the impact of being neglected by both of my parents is
quite dramatic. It truly drains my energy to live, because I was neglected and
I still do not know where my life is heading…"* (S, pp. 509-512)

In contrast, participant O described becoming more attentive to others, increasingly sensitive to their social environment, and more inclined to help peers. The desire to avoid loneliness motivated them to maintain interpersonal connections.

> *"…I have become more attentive to others, more sensitive to my surroundings, and I often help my friends, because being alone does not feel good…"* (O, pp. 192-194)

Similarly, participant H reported having a limited social circle and experiencing difficulties in socialization, which they identified as the most salient impact of parental neglect.

> *"…I feel like I have very few friends and find it difficult to socialize. That is the impact I feel most strongly…"* (H, pp. 310-311)

The Influence of Parent-lessness

Participant J described a peer interaction style characterized by considerable freedom and minimal boundaries.

> *"…When I am with my friends, it is very free. For example, drinking alcohol and coming home late at night…"* (J, pp. 240–241)

Participant S explained that their experiences of parent-lessness had significantly affected their ability to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. They reported emotional exhaustion, communication anxiety, and fear of unintentionally hurting others or triggering conflict.

> *"…This has greatly affected me, because it is difficult to build relationships with other people. It feels exhausting to try to form relationships, such as having long conversations. I am also very afraid of speaking, worrying that my words might hurt others, offend them, or lead to major conflicts…"*
> (S, pp. 532-537)

Similarly, participants D and O reported that experiences of parent-lessness had a substantial impact on their emotional regulation and social relationships. Both described a tendency to suppress anger, which sometimes resulted in emotional outbursts and a heightened need to seek affection outside the home environment.

> *"…It has a very strong influence, especially on our emotions, because as children we often suppress anger. When communicating with others, if something feels unresolved, it can easily come out in the form of emotional reactions…"* (D, pp. 374-377)

Meaning of Psychological Well-Being

Participant J explained that both their peer environment and residential context were unfavourable, as they were frequently associated with maladaptive and risky behaviors, such as substance use. This social environment also negatively affected their academic motivation.

> *"…So, the peer environment or living area is not supportive. By 'not supportive,' I mean that friendships often lead to alcohol consumption and similar behaviors. During my school years, this environment even made me lose motivation to attend school…"* (J, pp. 247-250)

Participant S perceived their psychological well-being as being at a very low level due to prolonged life stressors and the burden of facing multiple difficulties independently. These cumulative pressures resulted in profound psychological distress and a sense of emotional exhaustion.

> *"…Very poor… extremely poor. Nothing feels positive. Everything has had a severe impact on my mental condition and psychological well-being. The*

accumulation of problems that I had to face alone made everything feel overwhelming…" (S, pp. 541-547)

Participants D and O described how life experiences significantly influenced their psychological condition, shaping aspects of personality, self-confidence, and interpersonal openness. These experiences contributed to increased emotional sensitivity and a tendency to become more withdrawn from their social environment.

> *"…In my opinion, life experiences greatly affect a person's psychological condition. Especially for me as a woman, emotional sensitivity may be higher, which makes certain experiences more impactful compared to others who may respond more indifferently to similar problems…"* (D, pp. 384-386)

Experiences Influencing Psychological Well-Being

Participant D stated that experiences of parental neglect had a significant impact on their psychological condition during childhood. The absence of appreciation for achievements or efforts contributed to feelings of emotional invalidation, which negatively affected their psychological well-being.

> *"…There is certainly an impact. Experiences of being neglected greatly influence our psychological condition as children. For example, when we achieve something or receive an academic ranking but do not receive appreciation, it has a strong effect on our psychological well-being…"*
> (D, pp. 404-407)

In line with this, participant O expressed difficulty in experiencing and trusting affection from others. This uncertainty reflects challenges in forming secure emotional perceptions and interpersonal trust.

> *"…It is difficult to feel loved. I do not know whether someone genuinely cares or not; that is what I experience…"* (O, pp. 225-226)

Participant S described school-related experiences that led to feelings of discomfort and reduced self-confidence, particularly due to the absence of parental figures during important academic moments. This absence heightened feelings of social discomfort and emotional vulnerability.

> *"…I think it happened mostly during my school years. During events like report card collection or school meetings, parents usually attend. In my case, no one came, which made me feel uncomfortable, especially when people asked why no one was there…"* (S, pp. 559-563)

Coping Strategies for Experiencing Parent-lessness

Participant S described coping with personal difficulties by adopting a light-hearted and humorous approach in daily interactions. Using laughter and casual conversations serves as an emotional regulation strategy that helps reduce psychological distress.

> *"…To cope with it, I mostly just laugh it off. For example, when I am sitting with friends or anyone else, we just talk, discuss things, and keep the atmosphere light and humorous…"* (S, pp. 578-581)

Similarly, participant D explained that increasing communication and social interaction with others was an effective way to cope with experiences of parental neglect. Engaging in social activities helped distract from ongoing personal problems and provided emotional relief.

"…The way I cope with this neglect is by increasing communication with people outside, so I can forget about the problems I often face. I try to communicate more with friends, spend time together, or focus on work..."
(D, pp. 414-417)

Participant O addressed experiences of parental neglect by focusing on moving forward and avoiding excessive rumination about past parental issues. This approach contributed to greater autonomy, mature decision-making, openness to new experiences, and psychological growth.

"…To deal with my experiences, I try to live my life without constantly thinking about my past related to my parents' problems. It has made me more courageous in making my own decisions, thinking more maturely, being open to new things, and continuing to try..." (O, pp. 230-234)

Cultural Influences on Emotional Experiences

Participant S expressed the view that being a descendant of royalty does not necessarily equate to happiness, but rather entails psychological pressure to demonstrate resilience, emotional restraint, and leadership capacity. This cultural identity contributed to expectations that shape emotional expression and coping behaviors.

"…There is nothing particularly special in my place, as I explained earlier. I tend to remain quiet. However, culturally, because of my lineage, specifically because I follow my clan, which is considered a royal lineage, there is an inherent expectation placed on me..." (S, pp. 608-611)

Similarly, participant D indicated that cultural values influence interpersonal dynamics, particularly in managing differences of opinion. Respect for others was described as a primary strategy for maintaining social harmony and emotional stability.

"…The way to handle it is simply by showing respect. If our opinions are appreciated, we are grateful; if they are not, then we let it go. That is how it is…" (D, pp. 443-445)

Discussion

Based on the findings from this study, the results indicate low psychological well-being among adolescents experiencing the absence of parents. All participants reported similar experiences related to the loss of a parental figure, which had a significant impact on their mental development. The process they went through was not easy and required considerable time to achieve psychological well-being. Additionally, diverse family backgrounds also contributed to this process, but participants consistently reported that adolescents in parentless situations often face various emotional challenges, such as difficulty in regulating emotions and increased irritability. In navigating their lives, participants tried to identify effective strategies to cope with feelings of loss and deep sadness. These strategies included building social support networks with friends and family and engaging in activities that allowed them to channel emotions in positive ways. From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, psychological well-being is achieved when individuals successfully resolve conflicts at each developmental stage, leading to happiness; conversely, failure to resolve these conflicts results in unhappiness (Santrock, 2011). Each developmental stage contains specific conflicts that must be resolved. This framework explains why participants exerted greater effort to overcome emotional difficulties, enabling them to resolve conflicts and progress toward healthier developmental stages.

Emotional instability can disrupt social relationships and peer interactions; therefore, adolescents need to learn constructive emotion regulation and coping skills, such as self-awareness,

seeking social support, and engaging in therapy. To develop into a whole and integrated individual, participants require a harmonious family environment to sustain their lives (Saputro, 2018). Although each participant reported unique experiences, all demonstrated similarities in their efforts to seek support and build emotional resilience. They faced significant pressures related to living under parentless conditions, yet attempted not to remain overwhelmed by sadness. These pressures may originate internally or from external sources (Andriyani, 2019). The varied responses exhibited by participants often hindered their daily functioning; however, these responses did not necessarily facilitate adaptation to life under parentless circumstances. Furthermore, this study identified a strong determination among participants to change themselves.

They endeavored to remain socially engaged despite challenges in managing heightened sensitivity and excessive empathy, striving to live happily without being anchored to the past. Sun and Nolan (2021) define emotion regulation as an individual's ability to evaluate, initiate, monitor, and modify emotional reactions to achieve personal goals. Adolescents experiencing parentless conditions in this study underwent a difficult process of self-acceptance. They attempted to understand that their family circumstances were not their fault. Additionally, they expressed a desire for community members, particularly neighbours, to refrain from interference, as discussions surrounding parental divorce significantly affected their emotional well-being. This issue is particularly salient for adolescents confronting parental divorce. Self-acceptance is crucial for adapting to circumstances and managing family conflict (Dewi & Herdiyanto, 2018). Some adolescents in this study reported low self-esteem and perceived inadequacy, while others struggled to identify and develop their potential in the workforce. They also experienced feelings of alienation and increased confusion regarding their strengths when observing the happiness of other families. Moreover, participants recognized that interpersonal relationships are often complex due to differing perspectives and expectations that shape social interactions.

They acknowledged that relationships can lead to disappointment, particularly when expectations are unmet. Consequently, maintaining boundaries in social relationships is important to prevent excessive dependence on others. Parental roles remain crucial as primary educators in adolescent development, serving as role models whose attitudes, speech, and behaviors are often imitated by adolescents (Adi, 2022). Psychological well-being is influenced by several factors. Age was a relevant factor for all participants, regardless of gender. Prior experiences led some participants to feel they did not require assistance from others, while others continued to seek emotional support, and some transformed these experiences into heightened sensitivity toward others. Some participants attempted to accept their family situations despite lingering feelings of jealousy, while others expressed aspirations to build complete families to prevent similar experiences for their future partners and children. Therefore, participants at this developmental stage require increased attention, guidance, and assistance in addressing the challenges they face (Sari et al., 2020).

Consistent with these findings, Anggreine et al. (2022) reported that parents play a vital role in supporting adolescents' interests and talents. For some adolescents experiencing parentless conditions, relationships with parents did not function optimally. Several participants reported long-standing disappointment originating in childhood, whereas others perceived their relationships as relatively adequate, though not as close, or intensive as expected. Similarly, Sari et al. (2020) noted that parental absence due to work commitments may reduce emotional closeness between parents and adolescents. Parents must understand how to address adolescents' psychological needs without making them feel overly controlled (Sari et al., 2020). In the developmental process, parental perspectives are essential, including respecting adolescents' opinions, encouraging self-expression, and providing opportunities for open communication (Liliwati, 2020). Gender emerged as a factor influencing how adolescents relate to others and manage emotions, although its effects varied across participants. Male adolescents tended to exhibit more liberal and expressive social

styles, sometimes engaging in risky behaviors, whereas female adolescents were generally more cautious in social relationships. Nevertheless, both groups experienced emotional consequences, such as suppressing anger and seeking affection outside the home.

In line with this, Ryff (2014) reported that women tend to score higher than men on the dimension of positive relations with others as part of psychological development. Support from friends and romantic partners was perceived as highly important, as it provided opportunities for sharing experiences, diverting attention from family problems, and reducing feelings of loneliness. Participants reported that prolonged stressful life experiences significantly lowered their psychological well-being, in some cases leading to thoughts of ending their lives due to exhaustion from facing problems alone. In contrast, other participants experienced psychological impacts such as reduced self-confidence, personality changes, and increased social withdrawal. According to Allport (as cited in Feist & Roberts, 2018), individuals with psychological well-being are considered mature. Maturity is characterized by self-awareness, the ability to form positive relationships, self-acceptance, a realistic perception of reality, insight and humour, and a clear understanding of life goals. Psychological well-being is closely associated with personal relationships, social interactions, and overall life satisfaction (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2015). This study found that experiences of parental neglect had a significant impact on psychological conditions.

When participants attempted to demonstrate achievements, such as obtaining high academic rankings or personal successes, but failed to receive recognition, they experienced disappointment and feelings of neglect. Over time, such experiences can erode self-confidence and self-esteem. Paramita and Faradiba (2020) reported that neglect is among the most prevalent forms of abuse. Cultural factors also influenced emotional expression. Being perceived as part of a "golden generation" was not associated with happiness but rather with the burden of demonstrating strength and leadership ability. In resolving differences of opinion, mutual respect was emphasized regardless of agreement. Culture encompasses societal norms, beliefs, and traditions, and distinctions between individualistic and collectivistic cultures influence psychological well-being (Ryff, 2014). Consequently, cultural factors shape adolescents' emotional expression and support the development of psychological well-being. Participants experiencing parentless conditions often chose not to adhere to patriarchal norms as a means of preserving psychological well-being that was not adequately supported within their family environments.

Beyond these dimensions and factors, this study identified additional diversity among participants. Adolescents with younger parents were more vulnerable to neglect due to limited knowledge, life experience, financial resources, and safe home environments, as well as poorer judgment associated with underdeveloped emotional regulation (Peterson et al., 2017). Participants demonstrated diverse experiences and coping strategies in addressing parentless conditions. Despite frequent conflicts within extended families, the importance of maintaining hope for a positive future was emphasized. Some participants were motivated by their social environments to become independent and self-reliant, while others received strong support from close relationships, fostering resilience and motivation. This study revealed that each participant confronted parentless experiences differently. Some chose gratitude, conflict avoidance, and striving to do their best within their capabilities. Participants employed various strategies, ranging from maintaining a light emotional outlook to fostering independence.

The findings indicate that each participant possessed unique factors supporting their journey toward psychological well-being. Although the participants had not fully achieved psychological well-being, they continued to persevere and navigate daily life using available coping mechanisms. In conclusion, this study illustrates the efforts of adolescents experiencing parentless conditions to attain psychological well-being through managing social relationships, accepting family circumstances, and actively seeking necessary support.

CONCLUSION

Based on the review conducted, it can be concluded that adolescents experiencing parentless conditions face substantial challenges in achieving mental health and exhibit poor psychological well-being, with significant impacts on emotional development. These impacts include difficulties in emotion regulation, heightened irritability, and pressures arising from both internal and external factors. Nevertheless, the participants demonstrated resilience and a strong motivation to cope by seeking social support, engaging in positive activities, and making efforts to develop emotional resilience. The study also found that emotion regulation skills constitute a critical element that enables participants to endure adversity, accept their circumstances, and plan. Although individual experiences varied, participants shared a common determination not to remain trapped in prolonged sadness. The researchers acknowledge several limitations in the present study and recommend that future research broaden the range of participants, apply theoretical frameworks addressing the dynamics of parentless adolescents within specific contexts, and employ quantitative measurements of psychological well-being across male and female adolescents. In addition, future studies are encouraged to support adolescents in enhancing personal competencies, reducing feelings of loneliness, and fostering stronger social bonds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors were directly involved in all stages of the study, including the development of the research design, the implementation of the research, and the preparation of the complete manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

Adi, L. (2022). Family education from an Islamic perspective. *Ar-Rashid Journal of Education*, *7*(1), 1–9.

Aini, S. N., Jihan, J., Nuraini, F., Saripuddin, S., & Gunawan, H. (2023). Educational quality and parenting styles: A multidisciplinary review. *Journal on Education, 5*(4), 11951–11964. https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i4.2154

Andriyani, J. (2019). Stress coping strategies in overcoming psychological problems. *At-Taujih: Islamic Guidance and Counseling, 2*(2), 37–55. https://doi.org/10.22373/taujih.v2i2.6527

Anggreine, D., Fauziyah, E., & Rahmawati, F. (2022). The influence of parenting styles on children's psychological development. Awwaliyah: *Journal of Primary Teacher Education, 5*(1), 73–80.

Akhtar, S., & Barlow, J. (2018). Forgiveness therapy for the promotion of mental well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 19*(1), 107–122. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016637079

Aziz, M. (2015). Social behavior of adolescents from broken homes from multiple perspectives. *Al-Ijtimaiyyah Journal, 1*(1), 30–50. https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtimaiyyah.v1i1.252

Berliana, S. M., Augustia, A. W., Rachmawati, P. D., Pradanie, R., Efendi, F., & Aurizki, G. E. (2019). Factors associated with child neglect in Indonesia: Findings from the National Socio-Economic Survey. *Children and Youth Services Review, 106,* 104487. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104487

Budiman, M. (2022). Meaning of life among adolescents from broken families. *Psikohumanika Journal, 14*(1), 129–142. https://doi.org/10.31001/j.psi.v14i2.1708

Cavanaugh, J. C., & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2015). Adult development and aging. *Cengage Learning.*

Chen, I. H., Lee, Z. H., Dong, X. Y., Gamble, J. H., & Feng, H. W. (2020). The influence of parenting style and time management tendency on internet gaming disorder among adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(23), 9120. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17239120

Creswell, J. W. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach.* Pustaka Pelajar.

Dewi, I. A. S., & Herdiyanto, Y. (2018). *Self-acceptance dynamics among adolescents from broken homes in Bali. Udayana Journal of Psychology, 5*(2), 434–443.

Feist, J., Feist, G. J., & Roberts, T. A. (2018). Theories of personality (9th ed.). *McGraw-Hill Education.*

Hamibawani, S. Z., Hambali, I. M., & Indreswari, H. (2024). Psychological well-being profiles of students from broken families. *G-Couns: Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 8*(2), 859–866. https://doi.org/10.31316/gcouns.v8i2.5566

Hardjo, S., & Novita, E. (2015). The relationship between social support and psychological well-being among adolescent victims of sexual abuse. *Analitika, 7*(1), 12–19. https://doi.org/10.31289/analitika.v7i1.856

Huppert, F. A. (2009). Psychological well-being: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 1*(2), 137–164. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x

Ifdil, I., Sari, I. P., & Putri, V. N. (2020). Psychological well-being among adolescents from broken families. *Indonesian Journal of School Counseling, 5*(1), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.23916/08591011

Joyce, A. N. (2016). High-conflict divorce: A form of child neglect. *Family Court Review, 54*(4), 642–656. https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12249

Kildare, C. A., & Middlemiss, W. (2017). Impact of parents' mobile device use on parent-child interaction: A literature review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *75*, 579-593. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.06.003

Ko C.-H., Wang P.-W., Liu T.-L., Yen C.-F., Chen C.-S., Yen J.-Y. (2015). Bidirectional associations between family factors and internet addiction among adolescents in a prospective investigation. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, 69*(4), 192–200. https://doi.org/10.1111/pcn.12204

Lawrence, T. I., Merrin, G. J., & Mcfield, A. A. (2022). Family violence and adolescent aggressive behavior: The direct and indirect effects of depression and substance use. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 12*(4), 920-937. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-022-00971-2

Liliwati, A. (2020). The role of parents in supporting home-based learning during the pandemic. *Journal of Early Childhood Education, 5*(1), 549–558. https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v5i1.592

Liu, Q. Q., Yang, X. J., Hu, Y. T., Zhang, C. Y., & Nie, Y. G. (2020). How and when is family dysfunction associated with adolescent mobile phone addiction? Testing a moderated mediation model. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *111*, 104827. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104827

Megawati, E., & Herdiyanto, Y. K. (2016). The relationship between prosocial behavior and psychological well-being among adolescents. *Udayana Journal of Psychology, 3*(1), 132–141.

Merrilees, C. E., McCormick, M. P., Hsueh, J., Chou, P., & Cummings, E. M. (2018). Inter-parental interactionsand adolescent mood: A daily diary approach. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 27*(5), 1460–1472. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0983-2

Müller, L. M., Howard, K., Wilson, E., Gibson, J., & Katsos, N. (2020). Bilingualism in the family and child well-being: A scoping review. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *24*(5-6), 1049-1070.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006920920939

Munawarsyah. (2025). Divorce as a solution in toxic marital relationships: A legal analysis and its impact on the family. *Posita: Journal of Islamic Family Law, 3*(1), 17–26.

Nie, Q., Tian, L., & Huebner, E. S. (2020). Relations among family dysfunction, loneliness, and life satisfaction in Chinese children: A longitudinal mediation model. *Child Indicators Research*, *13*(3), 839-862. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-019-09650-6.

Paramita, A. D., Faradiba, A. T., & Mustofa, K. S. (2020). Adverse childhood experiences and deliberate self-harm among adolescents in Indonesia. *Jurnal Psikologi Integratif, 9*(1), 16–28.

Patton, G. C., Sawyer, S. M., Santelli, J. S., Ross, D. A., Afifi, R., Allen, N. B., & Viner, R. M. (2016). Our future: A lancet commission on adolescent health and well-being. *The Lancet, 387*(10036), 2423-2478. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)00579-1

Peterson, C. M., Peugh, J., Loucks, L., & Shaffer, A. (2017). Emotional maltreatment in family of origin and young adult romantic relationship satisfaction: A dyadic data analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 35*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517700300

Prabowo, A. (2016). Kesejahteraan psikologis remaja di sekolah. *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi Terapan, 4*(2), 246–260

Pradana, H. H. (2023). Psychological well-being among adolescents from broken families. *SINDA: Comprehensive Journal of Islamic Social Studies, 1*(3), 198–203. https://doi.org/10.28926/sinda.v1i3.764

Pratama, R., Syahniar, S., & Karneli, Y. (2016). Aggressive behavior among students from broken families. *Konselor, 5*(4), 238. https://doi.org/10.24036/02016546557-0-00

Ramadhani, T., Djunaedi, D., & Sismiati, A. (2016). Psychological well-being of students with divorced parents: A descriptive study conducted at SMK Negeri 26 Pembangunan Jakarta. *Insight: Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 5*(1), 108–115. https://doi.org/10.21009/INSIGHT.051.16

Russell B. S., Hutchison M., Tambling R., Tomkunas A. J., Horton A. L. (2020). Initial challenges of caregiving during COVID-19: Caregiver burden, mental health, and the parent–child relationship. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development, 51*(4), 671-682. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-020-01037-x

Ryff, C. D. & Singer, B. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Psychology*, *9*(1),13-39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0

Ryff, C. D. (2014). Psychological well-being revisited: Advances in thescience and practice of eudaimonia. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 83*(1), 10–28. https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263

Ryff, C. D. (2018). Well-being with soul: Science in pursuit of human potential. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *13*(2), 242-248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617699836

Santrock, J. W. (2011). Life span development. *New York, NY: McGraw-Hill*

Saputro, K. Z. (2018). Understanding the characteristics and developmental tasks of adolescence. *Aplikasia: Journal of Applied Religious Sciences, 17*(1), 25–32.

Sari, A. F. (2020). Communication ethics: Instilling an understanding of ethical communication among university students. *TANJAK: Journal of Education and Teaching, 1*(2), 127–135.

Steiner, K. L., & Pillemer, D. B. (2018). Development of the life story in early adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *38*(2), 125–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431616659562

Stroud, C. B., Meyers, K. M., Wilson, S., & Durbin, C. E. (2015). Marital quality spillover and young children'sadjustment: Evidence for dyadic and triadic parenting as a mechanism. *Journal of Clinical Child andAdolescent Psychology, 44*(5), 800–813. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2014.900720

Sugioyono. (2019). Metode penelitian kuantitatif kualitatif dan R&D. *Bandung : Alfabeta*.

Sun, Y., & Nolan, C. (2021). Emotion regulation strategies and stress in Irish college students and Chinese international college students in Ireland. *Journal of International Students, 11*(4), 853-873. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11i4.2516ojed.org/jis

Susanti, S. S., & Supradaniati, S. S. (2018). Psychological well-being among Indonesian students studying abroad. *Idea Nursing Journal, 9*(2), 50–54. http://jurnal.unsyiah.ac.id/INJ/article/view/14028

Triwahyuningsih, Y. (2017). Kajian meta analisis hubungan antara self esteem dan kesejahteraan psikologis. *Buletin Psikologi*, *25*(1), 26-35. https://doi.org/10.22146/buletinpsikologi.9382

Wang, Y., Tian, L., Guo, L., & Huebner, E. S. (2020). Family dysfunction and Adolescents' anxiety and depression: A multiple mediation model. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 66*(1), 101090. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2019.101090

Yasmin, K. H. A. N., Taghdisi, M. H., & Nourijelyani, K.(2015). Psychological Well-Being (PWB) of schooladolescents aged 12–18 yr, its correlation with general levels of Physical Activity (PA) and socio-demographic factors in Gilgit, Pakistan. *Iranian Journal of Public Health, 44*(6), 804–813. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26258093

Yusuf, S. A., Daud, M. N., & Arshat, Z. (2021). Perception of the role of parenting style on juvenile delinquency among adolescents in the government remand homes, Lagos State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *11*(6), 1425-1441. http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i6/10042