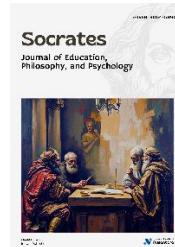




# Socrates: Journal of Education, Philosophy, and Psychology

| ISSN (Online) [3064-5891](https://doi.org/10.63217/socrates.v1i4.168) |  
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63217/socrates.v1i4.168>



## The Effects of Parental Divorce on Children's Self-Confidence and Independence

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**Abstract:** Divorce is a social phenomenon with the potential to significantly impact children's psychological development, particularly in terms of self-confidence and independence. This article aims to explore the influence of divorce on these two aspects through a literature review. By examining various studies and relevant sources, it is evident that divorce can affect children both directly and indirectly, depending on factors such as the child's age, family support, and the parents' conflict management strategies. Common impacts include decreased self-confidence, difficulty in decision-making, and limitations in social and emotional independence. However, family support and a nurturing environment can serve as mitigating factors, helping children overcome these negative effects. This study is intended to provide insights into children's needs in post-divorce situations and offer recommendations for parents and policymakers to support children's optimal development.

**Keyword:** Divorce, Self-Confidence, Independence, Children

## INTRODUCTION

A family is a group of people who live together through blood ties or marriage. It is the first and most important environment for children. A harmonious relationship between parents and children is essential, as harmony within the household influences children's development and education. However, not all families achieve this. Building a happy marriage is not easy, and marriages often fail. Instead of happiness or peace, they often experience arguments (Hendra & Arifa, 2024). Some couples face difficult-to-resolve conflicts or incompatibilities, ultimately resorting to separation or divorce.

Divorce is the most undesirable outcome in a marriage. However, divorce cases are still common, especially in Indonesia (Bella Syahrani Nasution, 2023). Divorce can be defined as the end of a husband and wife relationship, decided by law or religion (talaq) due to a loss of mutual attraction, trust, and compatibility, resulting in disharmony in the household (Ramadhani & Krisnani, 2019).

Among the factors contributing to divorce are economic factors, infidelity, parental interference in the child's household, and physical abuse of a spouse (domestic violence) (Willis,

2015). Divorce not only affects both parties involved but also has a significant impact on children who witness or are directly affected by the breakup (Lestari, 2016).

Divorce often has negative consequences, but maintaining a dysfunctional marriage can also have detrimental effects on both partners and children. In some stressful marital situations, divorce can be a step that brings positive change and supports better personal development. Living in a family where frequent fighting can hinder children from developing healthy personalities. This kind of situation has the potential to create a lack of self-confidence, which can ultimately prevent them from achieving optimal performance. Of course, after a divorce, not only the couple must adapt to a new life, but the children must adjust as well. A child's adjustment to the post-divorce environment is greatly influenced by their parenting style. If parents continue to provide guidance and understanding, the child will more easily adjust to the post-divorce situation. Hurlock stated that children who experience a lack of connection with their parents will certainly experience emotional trauma, feeling ashamed and hurt because they feel different from other children. This will damage the child's personality, unless they live in an environment that is predominantly composed of divorced families (Hurlock, 1978). According to the 2023 statistical report, divorce cases in Indonesia increased by 15% compared to the previous year. In 2021, divorce cases reached 447,743, then increased to 516,334 in 2022. This number of divorces has reached the highest level in divorce statistics for the past six years, with the majority of divorces occurring due to lawsuits filed by the wife (Hidayah, 2023).

Parental divorce is a significant issue for children, especially young children, who still need the full love of both parents. At this age, children are in a sensitive phase of emotional development, so the loss of a parental figure can impact their sense of security, self-confidence, and psychological development. Parental divorce also affects children emotionally, causing them to suffer and feel depressed, develop feelings of shame and guilt, all of which contribute to internal conflict. Children often become angry, rebellious, and unruly because they feel their divorced parents are unworthy role models (Hasanah, 2020).

Children of divorce also become emotional when others, or even friends, ask about their parents. Divorce forces children to navigate difficult times alone. If children experience discomfort from an early age, their mental health will gradually deteriorate. Humans instinctively desire to be loved and dislike harsh treatment. Children of divorce often require more support, attention, and affection than children in general (Ramadhani & Krisnani, 2019).

Divorce is a traumatic experience that can have a significant impact on children. Children tend to experience the loss of one parent from their lives, which profoundly affects their personality and psychological development. Living in a family where frequent conflict can hinder children from developing healthy personalities. This situation can potentially lead to a lack of self-confidence, which can ultimately prevent them from achieving optimal performance.

Self-confidence is crucial to develop in everyday life, both in behavior and in interactions with others. Children with high self-confidence are likely to be sociable and wise in making decisions. However, self-confidence is greatly influenced by the family environment, which plays a crucial role in instilling self-confidence through interactions between parents and children. A supportive and caring family environment is a key factor in shaping a child's self-confidence. When parents provide affection, attention, and constructive praise, children will feel valued and more confident in facing various challenges. Conversely, disharmony within the family or a lack of parental attention can hinder the development of a child's self-confidence, which can lead to feelings of inferiority or an inability to take initiative. By communicating effectively between parents and children, and providing opportunities for children to express their feelings and opinions, parents can help children develop strong self-confidence, which ultimately supports their success in various aspects of life, both in social relationships and academic achievement.

Furthermore, the impact of parental divorce also results in changes in parenting patterns. Generally, divorce results in one parent taking on a more dominant role in caring for the child, while the other parent's role becomes more limited. The lack of emotional or physical

involvement from one parent can reduce the child's opportunity to receive balanced guidance and support.

Divorce is also often a source of emotional distress for children. Feelings of loss, confusion, and anxiety can create insecurity, which in turn inhibits children from taking initiative and becoming independent. As a result, children may become overly dependent on one parent to meet their emotional needs, making it difficult to develop self-confidence and independent problem-solving skills. One indicator of a child's independence is their ability to believe in themselves or have strong self-confidence (Rosmaya et al., 2019).

## METHOD

The research method used in this study is a literature study. Literature study research is a method in which researchers examine various literature studies required for the research (Nazir, 2014). This research was conducted by collecting theoretical references relevant to the topic and problems identified by the researcher. The theories obtained through this literature study were used as the primary foundation for the research discussion.

The researcher conducted a literature study through references from various sources, including journals, books, and the internet. The literature or data sources collected included journals, books, and the internet, all of which were relevant to the problem topic. The literature study method in this research serves as the initial planning step, utilizing library sources to obtain the necessary data without the need for direct field observation.

After obtaining data sources as references, the next step is analyzing the literature review data using content analysis. Content analysis is conducted by objectively examining a text to understand its content as it is, without the influence of the researcher's subjectivity (Ahmad, 2018). The results of this study are expected to help parents pay attention to the psychological and mental aspects of their children after divorce.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Effects of Divorce on Children's Self-Confidence

Socially intelligent children tend to have strong social networks, communicate well, and cooperate in a variety of situations. In the context of separated families, children may experience difficulties in establishing social relationships due to environmental changes and the emotional turmoil they face (Harahap et al., 2024).

Children whose parents divorce often have to deal with significant life changes, such as separation from one parent or even moving. When children feel they are receiving insufficient attention or emotional support from one or both parents, they may begin to question their self-worth. In some situations, children may even blame themselves for the divorce, further exacerbating feelings of worthlessness. Children who were previously cheerful and confident in social settings or at school may become more withdrawn and reluctant to participate in group activities.

Self-confidence is a psychological concept that refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities. It is a condition in which a child demonstrates the courage to engage in various activities and express their feelings without feeling embarrassed or afraid of being judged, and to interact and socialize with those around them (Simangunsong et al., 2024). Self-confidence refers to confidence in one's own abilities, recognizing that these abilities are sufficient to meet needs, and having the awareness to optimize them appropriately (Alkhofiyah, 2021). Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 of 2014 concerning Early Childhood Education Standards explains that self-confidence is the ability to demonstrate one's abilities and adapt to situations. If a child can develop self-confidence optimally, they will have no difficulty developing other aspects of their abilities (Puspitarini, 2013).

Self-confidence is not only a skill possessed by adults; it is also necessary for all children; however, the level of self-confidence varies from child to child (Hasibuan & Watini, 2022). Self-confidence is not an attitude unique to adults; it is also a crucial aspect of early childhood

development. Self-confidence in children plays a crucial role in shaping positive learning attitudes and interactions with others. This can be a foundation for their growth and development (Maslihah & Rachmi, 2018).

Lack of self-confidence in children can hinder their mental development and negatively impact their social skills and learning process. Children's self-confidence is demonstrated by their behavior, such as not hesitating to greet teachers when they meet, being bold enough to appear in front of friends, teachers, parents, and other social circles, being bold enough to express opinions, expressing desires, being brave enough to communicate with people they don't know before under teacher supervision, being proud to show off their work, enjoying participating in group activities, and not being influenced by others' judgments of them (Suminah et al., 2015).

Self-confidence is not something inherent at birth; rather, it is formed and developed from an early age. Self-confidence plays a crucial role in children's journey through life. It is a key asset for children's future success. With self-confidence, children will socialize more easily, master skills more quickly, and be better prepared to face various challenges.

#### 1. The effect of divorce on communication relationships

Parental divorce impacts a child's communication with their social environment. Parental divorce can affect a child's ability to form healthy social relationships. They may feel anxious or afraid to interact with friends or others, especially if they feel isolated or different from other children from intact families. This can lead to a decline in social skills and self-confidence (Kahrina et al., 2023). This situation arises when children lose the sense of security and self-confidence that typically develops through harmonious relationships with their parents. When divorce occurs, children tend to feel undervalued or confused about their position within the family. This uncertainty then affects their social interactions, making them more cautious when interacting with others for fear of rejection or being perceived as inadequate.

Children who experience conflict between their parents also often adopt unhealthy communication patterns. They tend to avoid conflict or choose to remain silent to avoid triggering negative reactions from those around them. As a result, they struggle to build trusting relationships with others. If this issue is left unaddressed, the impact can develop into more serious issues, such as difficulty working together in groups, a lack of courage to initiate social interactions, or even complete social withdrawal. Therefore, it is crucial for parents and those around children to provide consistent emotional support and create a safe space for children to speak and express their thoughts without fear.

#### 2. The effects of divorce on children's psychology

The effects of divorce are more pronounced in childhood and peak during adolescence (Luailik & Sa'diyah, 2023). Children of divorce victims are traumatized by the word "marriage," find it difficult to trust others, and find it difficult to accept the existence of others (Putri & Khoirunnisa, 2022). Some children feel sad about the changes brought about by divorce, lose the desire to continue life optimistically, and feel anxious about forming new relationships. They worry about repeating the mistakes made in their parents' relationship. Furthermore, emotional distance from parents or other family members often arises, further worsening their emotional state.

Children who experience parental divorce are at higher risk for depression and behavioral changes. They may become more withdrawn, withdraw from social interactions, or exhibit aggressive behavior. Furthermore, feelings of loss of direction and lack of motivation in life can emerge, which can affect their academic performance and social relationships.

Furthermore, divorce can leave children confused about how to manage their feelings. They may not know how to express anger, sadness, or disappointment in healthy ways. This inability to manage emotions often leads to undesirable behavior or difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Krasniqi, 2023).

### **The Effects of Divorce on Children's Independence**

Independence comes from the Javanese word "mandiri," meaning "to stand alone." Psychologically and mentally, independence refers to a person's ability to make decisions or carry out tasks without the assistance of others. This ability is only possible if someone is able to carefully consider their actions or decisions, considering both the benefits and potential disadvantages (Basri, 1996). Building independence in children is not easy. This process takes a long time and must be carried out in stages. Independence develops with the child's maturity, adapting to their age, so the process must follow their natural development.

To achieve independence, socially, emotionally, and intellectually, children must be given the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions. Independent children are usually able to overcome any challenges they face. This independence must be cultivated from an early age. Independence is closely related to children as individuals who have a self-concept, self-esteem, and self-regulation. The development of independence in early childhood can be described in terms of children's behavior and habits (Rantina, 2015).

In general, divorce does not significantly impact children's independence, but that doesn't mean it has no impact at all. The negative impact can be seen in some teenagers who drop out of school due to their parents' divorce, due to financial problems that arise after the divorce. As a result, they choose to drop out of school, struggle to make sound decisions for their future, and are unable to take responsibility for their education. This shows that parental divorce can indeed negatively impact children's independence.

After a divorce, children may feel compelled to take on more responsibilities, such as helping with housework or caring for younger siblings. These additional responsibilities can encourage children to become more independent. However, sometimes an excessive burden can cause them to feel overwhelmed, which actually hinders the development of independence that should naturally develop at this age.

With divorce, children may lose a parent who typically serves as a role model or authority figure in their lives. When the relationship with one parent is severed or diminished, children can struggle to navigate their lives and become less confident in making decisions, impacting their development of independence (Kahrina et al., 2023). Independence in children is realized when they begin to use their own thinking skills to make various decisions. This includes simple matters such as choosing school supplies or playmates, as well as more complex decisions involving more serious consequences (Rantina, 2015).

Children experiencing divorce often feel neglected and underappreciated. It is important for parents to continue providing adequate and consistent attention, even when they live apart. The active involvement of both parents in their children's lives can provide the sense of security needed for independent development.

## CONCLUSION

Parental divorce has a significant impact on a child's development, both emotionally, socially, and psychologically. Children whose parents divorce often experience loss, anxiety, and a decrease in self-confidence. In many cases, divorce can hinder a child's ability to build healthy social relationships, communicate effectively, and develop the independence necessary for daily life.

Loss of self-confidence is often caused by a lack of emotional attention and support after divorce, which can cause children to become withdrawn and have difficulty interacting with their peers and social circle. Furthermore, psychological impacts such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral changes often arise, affecting their social lives and academic performance. Although divorce presents challenges, children who receive stable emotional support from their parents tend to adapt more easily to these changes and develop a healthy sense of self-confidence and independence.

Overall, it is crucial for parents to continue to provide their children with full attention after divorce, maintain good communication, and create a supportive environment so that children can thrive despite the challenges they face.

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