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Forgiveness Experiences in Early Adult Women with Divorced Parents

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Abstract. *Divorce by parents can be a traumatic experience for children, especially women who are vulnerable to psychological problems in adulthood. A woman whose parents divorced and grew up in a broken home family must find a way to regulate and heal her emotional wounds. This research aims to explore the forgiveness experiences of early adult women with divorced parents. This research uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. This research involved four participants with the following criteria: women aged between 21-30 years, have divorced parents, and live in Yogyakarta which were obtained through social media broadcasts. The data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews. The research results found that the forgiveness experiences of early adult women can be grouped into two major themes, namely 1) the process of forgiving parents, which includes feelings, internal and external factors that encourage the forgiveness process as well as cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of forgiveness; and 2) the impact of forgiveness on participants' acceptance and meaning of their parent's divorce as well as participants' trust and hope in romantic relationships. This research offers supporting evidence that the process of forgiving in women with divorced parents can generate positive meaning and foster a sense of trust and hope in future romantic relationships. Furthermore, the results of this study can encourage mental health practitioners, especially in divorce cases, to consider handling relational aspects between children and parents in order to build trust and hope as a provision for their future romantic relationships.*

Keywords: *Broken home; divorce; early adult women; forgiveness.*

INTRODUCTION

The family has a vital role in every individual's life and is the smallest structure in society, but it has a large influence. The significant roles of the family include reproductive functions, socialization and education, assignment of social roles, financial or economic support, and emotional support or care. If the duties and roles of the family can be fulfilled, this will lead to harmonious relationships as a sign of achieving family happiness (Buehler, 2020). Apart from that, there must be a spark of conflict in every interaction between individuals. This conflict can occur between husband and wife, children and parents, or conflict between siblings (Camisasca et al., 2019; Miralles et al., 2023). Conflicts in marriage include problems of subsistence, finances,

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parenting and children's education, relationships with family, social environment, disagreements with a partner, division of labor in the household, as well as the challenging problems or consequences of the practice of religious values in life (Istiqomah et al., 2015). When these conflicts occur continuously, and a good resolution point cannot be found, it will lead to a stressful situation that results in the loss of harmony. In this condition, the family is said to be a family of a broken home (Camisasca et al., 2019; Miller, 2021).

A broken home is described as a family that has experienced a breakdown, where relationships and attention between family members have been lost (Lestari & Huwae, 2023). Two factors can cause a broken home; the first is when the family is divided due to divorce or the death of a family member. Second, when parents are not divorced, but they no longer show affection for each other (Saikia, 2017). When parents ultimately decide to divorce to end conflict in the family, the most significant impact will be felt, especially on the children in the family (Salifu Yendork et al., 2022). Divorce is defined as an agreement between husband and wife to no longer carry out their respective roles because separation is marked by the official breaking of the legal marriage bond (Miralles et al., 2023).

In the context of local Indonesian traditions such as Javanese culture, marriage conflict should be solved through a good discussion process, realization of position and role, and resolution without coercion towards each other (Aji et al., 2023). However, families in Indonesia often choose divorce as a way to resolve this conflict. Quoting data from Statistics Indonesia, 516,334 divorce cases were recorded in Indonesia in 2022. This number increased by 15.31% compared to 2021, when 447,743 cases were recorded. The number of marital separations in Indonesia in the previous year reached the highest in the last six years (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). There are many reasons why the divorce phenomenon is increasing, both from internal and external factors. Internal factors involve attitudes that prioritize oneself, financial problems, emotional stress experienced by partners at work, and violations in relationships (Emerson et al., 2021; Van Winkle & Leopold, 2021). External factors are related to avoiding negative associations, interference from third parties, and lousy speaking habits (Qamar & Faizan, 2021). Affair is one of the factors that often arises as a trigger for divorce. The presence of someone outside the marital relationship, either husband or wife, can cause an affair (Chen et al., 2021; Hald et al., 2022; Herrero et al., 2020).

Parental divorce, in general, harms an individual's mental health, ranging from mood disorders (depression and anxiety), suicide attempts and thoughts to addictive behaviors. (Auersperg et al., 2019). The impact of parental divorce can cause emotional wounds, especially for women, which affects the way they view commitment, trust, and satisfaction in a relationship (Demir-Dagdas et al., 2018; Eyo, 2018; Gustavsen et al., 2016). Early adult women who have a background of divorce in childhood are more at risk for mental disorders such as depression, loneliness, trauma, chronic stress, and attachment disorders (Schaan et al., 2019). In addition, divorce can also have an impact on individual interpersonal relationships, especially romantic relationships. A study by Roper et al. (2019) found that individuals who experience parental divorce will tend to feel less satisfied with their relationships, have a bad relationship with their parents and experience various problems in their romantic relationships. As a way to develop positive relationships with others and improve relationships with parents, early adult women who come from a broken home with divorced parents need to find ways to heal their emotional wounds. These individuals can take steps to grow or increase their attitude of forgiveness (Brewer-Smyth et al., 2020; Suwandi et al., 2023). Forgiveness is a complex process combining attitudes, knowledge, and emotions. This journey tends to be complicated and cannot be done quickly (Brady et al., 2023). Forgiveness must arise in the individual first, then the individual can forgive others who have hurt them (Brady et al., 2023;

Kleiven, 2023; Lin et al., 2014; Schumann & Walton, 2022). In other research, it is stated that the moment when a person is finally able to forgive can come from within the individual because of his awareness (internal factors) or from outside the individual due to the influence of the people closest to him, the situation, time, or environment (external factors), which encourages the person to begin to forgive (Bies et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2015).

For early adult women growing up with divorced parents, forgiving and accepting the past can be a difficult task. They must have had many painful experiences in their family. However, there is also hope that forgiveness can help heal the pain and trauma caused by the lousy past of the family members. Practicing forgiveness allows individuals to replace their emotions, such as anger, fear, hurt, and depression, with positive emotions, which helps develop positive character strengths and improves individuals' psychological well-being (Raj et al., 2016). Forgiveness is also very close and influential to the development of early adulthood because it is at this stage that adult traits emerge, namely the ability to keep promises, develop a sense of trust, and feel satisfaction in relationships. The more someone can forgive, the more mature and emotionally competent the individual is (Thorson, 2019).

The facts based on the phenomenon above have attracted the attention of the researchers to explore the experiences of early adult women who experience living in a broken home due to divorced parents. This research wants to see how the forgiveness process is carried out and the positive impacts of forgiveness on the participants. Previous research has not focused much on early adult women from broken-home families with divorced parents. This research is essential, and interesting given that the primary developmental task in early adulthood, according to Erickson's theory, is the ability to foster and maintain relationships with others (intimacy versus isolation). Early adult women need to find ways to heal their emotional wounds to develop positive relationships with others and improve relationships with parents. The individual can take steps to develop or enhance forgiving attitudes. Previous studies have differences in subjects that involve more children and adolescents and differences in the approach or paradigm used in conducting research.

METHOD

This qualitative research with a phenomenological approach aims to explore individuals' experiences and interpretations of a phenomenon from their perspective. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. This aims to provoke or generate personal opinions in participants. The interview technique used is a semi-structured interview that aims to enable researchers to deepen and develop the main questions by adjusting the participants' answers. This research was conducted in Yogyakarta throughout October 2023. Recruitment of participants was carried out by distributing broadcast posters on social media, based on the criteria: (1) women aged between 21-30 years, (2) have divorced parents, and (3) live in Yogyakarta. After two weeks, four participants met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study.

Data collection lasted one month, with an interview duration of 60-90 minutes in one session. Interviews were conducted in two sessions for each participant. The interview process was conducted offline, at a place agreed upon by each participant. Before the interview began, each participant signed the informed consent form. The main instrument in this research is an interview guide, which is prepared so that researchers have a reference in asking questions, and the information obtained does not deviate from the research objectives by limiting questions according to the research topic, as well as obtaining information from respondents in more detail and comprehensively. The research credibility was ensured through member checking

by asking participants to read and reconfirm the results findings. In addition, this research also uses external auditors who monitor the entire research process.

The series of data analyses carried out refer to Creswell (2014), namely 1) data reduction, intending to simplify, categorize and discarding unnecessary data so that it becomes meaningful and conclusions are more accessible to draw; 2) data presentation, carried out by arranging data into a relational model so that it is easier to understand; 3) drawing conclusions and verification, namely understanding the data and finding meaning by looking for relationships, similarities or differences and drawing conclusions as answers to existing questions, while validation aims to assess the suitability of the data more accurately and objectively towards the objectives included in the basic concept analysis. Furthermore, researchers obtain data saturation through agreement to determine the extent to which data collection is sufficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Overview

This research was conducted at a place and time agreed upon by each participant. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guidelines, took notes, and recorded the results of the interviews. This research involves four participants who are early adult women, namely AS (25 years), SL (24 years), AFF (24 years), and RKR (23 years). All participants come from a broken home whose parents divorced.

Divorces that occur always begin with arguments that last for a long time. Before a divorce occurs, the mother is the party who tends to try to maintain the relationship for the sake of the child. Meanwhile, divorce finally occurs when children become teenagers/adults and can understand the events in their parent's household. AS is an only child whose parents divorced when she was 18. SL is the eldest of three siblings, all of whom are female. SL's parents divorced when she was 20 years old. AFF is an only child whose parents divorced when she was 20. RKR is the youngest of three siblings and has two older brothers. Her parents' divorce occurred when he was 19 years old. The four participants met the requirements according to the criteria determined by the researchers. All participants are young adult women from a broken home with divorced parents. This can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Demography

Name (Initial)	Age When Parents Divorced	Current Age (Year)	Birth Order
AS	11	25	Only child
SL	12	24	Firstborn, three siblings
AFF	14	24	Only child
RKR	15	23	Last born, three siblings

The causes of divorce in this study refer to economic problems, incompatibility or differences in views, and extramarital affairs committed by the father. In the case of AS and AFF's parents' divorce, it occurred because of an affair committed by the father.

"Yes, my father had an affair, and he was caught when my mother was pregnant with my future younger brother. So, they argued, which later caused my mother to have a miscarriage." (AS, W1: 25-28)

“But at that time, my father was in his second puberty, so he diverted the problem, and it never ended. He diverted it by having a relationship with another woman, you know.” (AFF, W1: 49-54)

Meanwhile, the divorce of SL and RKR's parents occurred due to a prolonged conflict dominated by economic problems.

“My father is a labourer whose salary is not fixed. At that time, my mother's shop went bankrupt, so there were many debts. My father knew that, and for some reason, he often got angry at my mother and asked for a divorce. The economy and the family were destroyed.” (SL, W1: 43-49)

“My father turned out to be a gambler, and my mother, who became the breadwinner, finally got tired of paying the debts. It was not to mention household needs and their children's schooling. My mother might be unable to deal with it because she supported the family financially while my father was unemployed and incurred debts everywhere.” (RKR, W1: 25-30)

This is in accordance with several previous research which states that financial or economic problems in the family are one of the internal factors that cause divorce (Emerson et al., 2021; Van Winkle & Leopold, 2021). The occurrence of an affair in the household is the reason most often found in divorce cases (Qamar & Faizan, 2021). It is stated that the presence of someone from outside the marital relationship, both husband and wife, can also cause the affair (Chen et al., 2021; Hald et al., 2022; Herrero et al., 2020). Meanwhile, incompatibility or differences in views are a new factor discovered in this research.

“.... apart from that, my father and mother have different views, and both have strong opinions. My mother is the type of independent woman who does not want to be controlled and is quite emotional. Meanwhile, my father is also strict, from a very religious Muslim family, so with my mother, who is not very religious, it seems like they clashed and didn't get along. So, they often argued.” (SL, W1: 57-63)

Based on the research results, researchers found two main themes and five sub-themes, including: (1) The process of forgiving parents, which discusses feelings when facing parental divorce, factors causing parents' forgiveness, and portrayal of forgiveness carried out. (2) The influence of forgiveness talks about giving meaning and accepting parental divorce, as well as trust in romantic relationships. A summary of the main themes and sub-themes can be seen in Table 2.

Theme 1. Process of forgiving parents

The process of forgiving parents has long stages. Apart from the emotional and traumatic wounds resulting from the painful experience of their parents' divorce, the early adult women in this research each had a turning point, so they were able to forgive. The process of forgiveness certainly does not happen in a short time. Starting from participants' feelings towards their parents who were considered wrong to the factors that caused participants to forgive their parents finally are the topics discussed in this theme. Feelings when facing parental divorce. The experience of witnessing parents' arguments makes children feel angry and disappointed with both parents, as felt by SL or just one of the participants (when someone is having an affair). This was felt by AS, AFF, and RKR, who only felt disappointed, angry, or hateful towards the father and tended to be on the side of the mother, who is seen as the victim (Garriga & Pennoni, 2022).

“I was angrier at them. In my opinion, father and mother are not wise in nature.” (SL, W1: 205-207)

“I was really disappointed with my father because he cheated. I was really angry with my father too. But, I was angrier at the woman with whom he cheated on my mother.” (AS, W1:155-157)

“...and yes, actually, I'd rather hold back my anger towards my father. Even though I wanted to curse, I tried asking him slowly.” (AFF, W1:97-102)

“I sympathized with my mother, and I'm grateful that she has finally divorced, but with my father, I was at the stage of hatred.” (RKR, W1:73-75)

Factors causing forgiveness of parents. This moment of forgiveness can come from within the individual as an internal factor and outside the individual as an external factor. These two factors encourage forgiveness for someone's behavior or conditions that occur (Bies et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2015). Internal factors from this research include: first, feelings of understanding parental incompatibility; second, a sense of sincerity gradually emerged, SL stated this.

“Yes, that is it, mbak, I understood more and more that they have not been compatible for a long time. Everything is different. When I felt relaxed and just went with the flow of life, I finally realized that this was indeed destiny from God, so I finally started to be sincere and forgive.” (SL, W1: 236-240)

And the third is closeness to parents makes it easy to forgive, as experienced by AS, who was able to forgive his father's affair because she is close to her father.

“I can forgive father too, maybe because I'm really close to father.” (AS, W1: 118-120)

Then, there are external factors, including: First, then a parent who is considered to be at fault experiences critical illness, as experienced by SL and RKR when their father was sick, fear arose that they would not be able to see their father again. SL's father's critical incident made the relationship between her and her father get better. At the same time, RKR felt the fear of losing her father in a situation where she and her father still could not get along causing her to begin to forgive her father.

“The incident when father was sick and had to have surgery made me start to melt and learn to forgive him.” (SL, W1: 223-225)

“Because my father was often sick, yesterday he had a heart attack. I was just afraid I would regret it if my father died, and I am still angry with him.” (RKR, W1: 87-92)

Second, parental love remains intact because both parents are responsible. This is based on what AS said that the mother plays more of a role in parenting and education because she lives with the mother, but the father remains the provider.

“My love is still complete. Father is more interested in material things, but caring and educating are more with mother because we live in the same house.” (AS, W1:142-144)

Third, repeated apologies from parents, this was said by AS and AFF, both of whom have the same background of parental divorce, namely caused by their father's affair.

“...and father still always apologizes every time we meet.” (AS, WI: 166-167)

“...it's just that father has really apologized. Until now, he keeps apologizing. Yes, that's what finally made me melt.” (AFF, 25-28)

When the father, as the party who is judged to be in the wrong, can finally lower his ego by apologizing to the child repeatedly, this makes the child more easily touched and ultimately forgives sincerely. Repeated and sincere apologies from the offending party are an essential factor in the emergence of forgiveness (Li et al., 2021).

Portrayal of forgiveness carried out. From this research, the portrayal of forgiveness can be seen from two things, namely by looking at thought patterns and emotions (Wulandari & Megawati, 2020) and the second is through actions (Zhou et al., 2021). The portrayal of forgiveness from thought patterns and emotions is realized by seeing the positive side or good things that both parents have, and being able to pray for goodness for parents is also a portrayal of this forgiveness. This is based on an interview with SL, who stated that she always prays for goodness and forgiveness for her parents.

“I pray that my sincerity as a child will also be a way for Allah's forgiveness for my parents. Yes, I hope our family lives well in our own ways.” (SL, WI: 240-244)

Meanwhile, AS and AFF still see and acknowledge the positive side of their father, who remains responsible and does not hesitate to apologize, regardless of his mistake in having an affair.

“Yes, my father is a gentleman because he really apologizes and will continue to provide for me as long as I am not married. My father once said that he would not limit my money because he felt guilty about me. Well, that's what I like about my father. At least he feels guilty towards his child and remains responsible.” (AS, WI: 103-109)

“Apologizing is something that seems difficult for men, but my father wants to humble himself to apologize to his daughter. He begs me every day via chat, to me, it is something that should be appreciated.” (AFF, WI: 28-31)

Forgiveness is realized through actions such as maintaining communication and making time for parents, as is done by AS and AFF.

“...there are times when I go for a walk with my father, eat together when my father isn't busy. Yes, it still goes on today. I still often meet my father.” (AS, WI: 148-152)

“Yes, communication now is even better than when my father and mother often fought and had not yet divorced. In the past, I really didn't feel like talking to him. Now that it is all over, I can chat casually.” (AFF, WI: 222-224)

Another thing that can be done is to be willing to care for sick parents as SL and RKR do.

“So, my father had a tumour a year ago, then had surgery. When he got better, I took the initiative to go to my father's family's house in Bantul, so I wanted to take care of my father while

making the relationship better." (SL, W1: 217-223)

"When he was hospitalized, that was the first time I tried to make my relationship with my father better, so I took care of him in turn with my brothers." (RKR, W1: 93-95)

Theme 2. Impact of forgiveness

Forgiveness which all participants successfully carried out certainly has a positive impact on their lives. As children, they are finally able to give meaning and accept their parents' divorce. As young adult women who have the developmental task of building intimacy with the opposite sex, their forgiveness also allows them to maintain confidence in romantic relationships.

Accepting and giving meaning to parental divorce. After the participants were able to forgive their parents, especially their father slowly, they finally accepted their family's condition. Like AS, who accepted that his father had started a family again.

"...besides, the more mature I am, the more grateful I am that they separated. Both of them are happy without any more quarrels and betrayals. Mom is productive again, father is also happy with his new partner." (AS, W1: 26-32)

Subjects SL, AFF, and RKR grew sincere after realizing their parents have the right to be happy with their choices.

"Instead of being together but fighting all the time, divorce is the best way. By divorcing, at least they are both happy, and I feel sincere when I try to understand them. Yes, in the end, I tried to forgive what had happened because I was getting older and understanding more." (SL, W1: 246-251)

"...with the situation like now, I'm actually calm and relieved. My parents are happy, so I can focus more on myself." (AFF, W1: 226-228)

"...but I'm trying to accept it because my mother seems happier and yes, maybe my father is happy too. Mother also always told me to let go of the past and not hate father. In essence, I hope this divorce is for their happiness. If what's important to me is that my mother's burden is lightened, I'm relieved too." (RKR, W1: 77-82)

When they can forgive and make sense of past events, they can feel peace and happiness. This is in accordance with research conducted by Wulandari & Megawati (2020), which stated that forgiveness positively affects a person's happiness and subjective well-being.

Trust in romantic relationships. This research shows that views on commitment and marriage in women from broken home backgrounds are influenced by several things apart from having succeeded in giving forgiveness, namely position or birth order, closeness to the father, and the presence of a male sibling. These things are new findings from this research.

Based on the results of interviews with SL, who is the eldest child, she tends to be more ignorant of matters related to romantic relationships. This is because she is very tired of taking care of her parents' problems and has trust issues with the opposite sex.

"My childhood and adolescence were spent watching my parents fight. So, I've never been in a

relationship before and haven't had time to think about it because my energy has been drained from taking care of my parents' problems. Because of that, I also have trust issues with the opposite sex." (SL, W1: 260-265)

The divorce of both parents also causes AFF to be less interested in marriage because she feels that it is only herself that can be relied on as an only child who is used to being alone. She also tends to lack trust in commitment because her parent's divorce was motivated by an affair.

"I thought it would be better not to get married, besides, I' was used to being alone. What I thought at that time was that I was afraid that I would get used to being together, but in the end, I would be abandoned and lied to by my partner." (AFF, W1: 232-235)

What happens to SL and AFF is supported by previous research, which states that people who grew up in a broken home, especially women, can experience a crisis of trust in romantic relationships (Demir-Dagdas et al., 2018). However, forgiveness has made AS and AFF believe again in marriage as a sacred union. Even though they are still afraid to commit to the opposite sex, they want a once-in-a-lifetime marriage.

"I'm not ready yet, but I have the idea of marriage now. I want a lifelong marriage because I have learned many lessons from my parents' divorce. Yes, at least accepting fate sincerely and forgiving turns out to heal." (AFF, W1: 238-242)

"The process of forgiving makes me better. I think marriage is a sacred union, and ideally only happens once in a lifetime. I forgive the condition of my parents' household, and I learned from there, don't let me hurt my children in the future with an unhappy household." (SL, W1: 270-277)

In contrast to AFF and SL, based on the results of interviews with AS, when a woman has had a warm relationship with her father since childhood, she can still have a romantic relationship with the opposite sex when she is an adult. Apart from tending to forgive her father more quickly, she also finds it more accessible to open her heart to the opposite sex. However, she still provides clear boundaries or agreements regarding commitment before convincing herself to enter marriage. Fear of betrayal still causes vigilance, even if the partner behaves well. This is the same as how she has forgiven her father.

"When we start a serious commitment, I always warn him not to cheat. I just want to be careful, we talk about this at the beginning. I believe it, but still have to be careful. Yes, more or less the same as I did with my father, trusting but being more aware." (AS, W1: 146-151)

Meanwhile, women who have brothers like RKR tend to be more open to romantic relationships because they see examples of male figures who are not only like their fathers. When their brother is married and has a harmonious family, this figure becomes an example of an excellent male figure, so that they can build relationship, build commitment with the opposite sex, and see marriage as a clear and not scary goal. In this case, forgiveness is only a supporting factor for RKR in giving meaning to commitment and trust in her partner. She does not feel suspicious or insecure in a relationship because she has regained trust in the opposite sex by forgiving her father's mistakes.

"I'm not afraid, but rather just preparing myself if my soul mate comes. I'm not insecure, and I'm not afraid of commitment because I see that my household is good, mbak. My brothers are both good, diligent, hard-working, and responsible. So yes, I know there is a good guy who is like my brothers. If they can, someday, I can too. Forgiving father also makes me feel happier." (RKR, W:105-112)

All subjects or participants involved in this research brought different experiences in practicing forgiveness. This research found that forgiveness does not simply mean accepting a situation, letting go, or letting go of negative emotions. Moreover, forgiveness is a form of children's love for their parents and themselves, preventing them from long-term negative impacts. Ultimately, the researchers can conclude that the experiences related to forgiveness are subjective. Each of the four participants has their own unique experiences, regardless of their turning point in forgiveness or how they practiced forgiveness.

Table 2.
Theme and Sub-Theme

Theme	Sub-Theme
Process of forgiving parents	Feelings when facing parental divorce
	Factors causing forgiveness of parents
	Portrayal of forgiveness carried out
Impact of forgiveness	Giving meaning and accepting parental divorce
	Trust in romantic relationships

Based on the results of data analysis in the field, the experiences of forgiveness in early adult women whose parents were divorced can be grouped into two major themes, namely (1) the process of forgiving parents and (2) the impact of forgiveness on oneself. The process of forgiveness is driven by internal factors, which include understanding the incompatibility of parents, feelings of sincerity/open-mindedness and the closeness established with parents after divorce. Meanwhile, external factors can come from significant events, such as when the parents become ill, which becomes a turning point in the forgiveness process. Apart from that, fulfilling parental responsibilities towards children after divorce and parents' willingness to apologizing to children can also be external factors that encourage and facilitate forgiveness.

Forgiveness in participants is described through cognitive aspects, namely by seeing positive things from parents, emotional aspects by giving the best prayers and behavioral aspects shown by maintaining communication, taking time and being obedient by caring for and paying attention to parents when they are in trouble. Furthermore, forgiveness also has a personal and interpersonal impact on participants. The forgiveness process allows participants to accept and interpret their parents' divorce in a more positive framework, giving rise to feelings of peace and happiness. The unique finding in this research is the impact of forgiveness on belief in romantic relationships. Even though all participants have different experiences, these unique differences ultimately lead to a sense of trust and hope for a better marriage and family life in the future.

The results of this study provide evidence that the process of forgiveness in adult women with divorced parents has unique and different characteristics. The process of forgiveness is not only determined by internal encouragement but also involves external encouragement that comes from

the parents themselves. Apart from that, forgiveness can also impact acceptance and positive meaning of divorce and foster a sense of trust and hope in future romantic relationships.

The limitation of this study is that it cannot explore the process that explains the impact of forgiveness on feelings of trust and hope in romantic relationships. In addition, in the interview process, the difficulty in determining the interview time agreement was also an obstacle which resulted in less effective data collection. Future research can further explore mechanisms that can explain the impact of forgiveness on early adult women's views, attitudes, and perceptions of future romantic relationships.

CONCLUSION

Forgiveness in early adult women who have a background of parental divorce is a long-term process that involves various factors, especially the relationship between women and their divorced parents. The forgiveness process can be seen as a mechanism to reinterpret the traumatic experience of parental divorce into something more positive. This study highlights how early adult women maintain a warm relationship with their parents even though they are no longer together in one intact family. Furthermore, this study revealed that forgiveness can play a role in constructing meaning and hope for future romantic relationships. Three out of four participants indicated that forgiveness not only provides a sense of peace and creates resolution but can also foster hope, caution, commitment and trust in their romantic relationships. The results of this study may inform mental health practitioners to consider the relational aspects between children and their divorced parents. Properly addressing these relational aspects can be a starting point for individuals with experiences of parental divorce to be able to build trust and hope that allows them to have healthier romantic relationships.

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