THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF DIGITAL PARENTING AMONG POST-DIVORCE MADURESE SINGLE MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT
Madura is a region with a relatively high divorce rate, resulting in an increasing number of single mothers. Women who become single mothers often face difficult circumstances and experience psychological impacts, particularly in implementing digital parenting in the modern era without the presence of a husband. This study aims to explore the psychological dynamics of Madurese single mothers in practicing digital parenting after divorce. This research adopts a qualitative method, using in-depth interviews as the primary data collection technique. The participants were single mothers from Madura who raise their children without a husband due to divorce. Data analysis was conducted using Thematic Analysis, which involves six stages of interpretation. The findings found that some single mothers experience parenting stress in the early stages following divorce. In addition, single mothers often go through a range of emotional states such as anger, sadness, and joy while applying digital parenting with their children. These findings are expected to contribute to supporting single mothers in fostering social sustainability and enhancing digital parenting literacy. This study also offers important insights to provide hope and direction for single mothers toward more sustainable and effective parenting practices.

Keywords: Digital Parenting, Single Mother, Parenting Practice

BACKGROUND

Divorce is a complex and challenging social phenomenon, particularly in Indonesia, where the divorce rate continues to rise annually. The latest report in 2022 showed an increase in the number of divorces in Madura, with 1,843 cases in Bangkalan, 1,697 in Sampang, 1,795 in Pamekasan, and 2,369 in Sumenep (BPS, 2023). This data suggests that divorce among married couples is still prevalent in Madura, leading to a rise in the number of Madurese women living alone. Another reason women live alone is the death of their husbands.

Women who become single mothers due to divorce often face significant psychological and social challenges within the family. The psychological dynamics experienced by single mothers after divorce generally involve complex emotional factors, such as prolonged stress that impacts their ability to care for their children (Jonathan & Herdiana, 2020).

Several studies have shown that divorce not only impacts the relationship between husband and wife but also has profound implications for children, especially in their upbringing and mental health (Ainina & Wulandari, 2023; Ramadhani & Krisnani, 2019; Untari et al., 2018). The impact of divorce also has the potential to change the way mothers interact and communicate with their children, which ultimately influences the parenting patterns they choose (Ainina & Wulandari, 2023; Untari et al., 2018).

Divorce can have a significant impact on a child's social and emotional development. Single mothers often struggle to cope with the dual burden of parenting, being both a father and a mother (Fahira et al., 2023). Facing the post-divorce reality, single mothers must not only adjust to their new roles but also learn to manage parenting in an ever-changing digital context. The use of digital technology can bring benefits but also risks, such as addiction and the loss of healthy social interactions. Therefore, it is important to understand how Madurese single mothers adapt to these dynamics of parenting in the digital age, which can potentially exacerbate the social and emotional challenges caused by the loss of a parental figure.

The digital era characterized by rapid access to information and social interaction through social media, presents unique challenges for single mothers. Research by Rahmawati et al. (2025) shows that low digital literacy can make it difficult to guide children in the safe and responsible use of technology. This responsibility is further burdened by the social stigma associated with being a single mother in the community, in the form of bullying, which can worsen their psychological and emotional well-being (Jonathan & Herdiana, 2020). This is especially true in areas like Madura, where social and cultural norms are strongly held, making the study of digital parenting a topic worthy of further study.

Single mothers must adapt not only to parenting responsibilities but also to the increasingly dominant influence of digital technology in their children's daily lives. Digital parenting relates to how parents monitor, guide, and support their children's use of digital media, and this can have a significant impact on children's psychological development (Huang et al., 2018). Parents' attitudes and beliefs about digital parenting significantly influence their ability to protect and support their children in the digital environment (Kumaş & Yıldırım, 2024).

Digital parenting for single mothers, particularly in the context of post-divorce Madurese society, is an increasingly relevant topic amidst technological developments and shifting social values. Today's society faces the challenge of managing children's interactions with technological devices, which impacts not only cognitive aspects but also mental and emotional health. The flexibility in parenting styles often adopted by single mothers reveals the various psychological challenges they face, including balancing their children's needs with the demands of daily life. Resilience is one way to overcome these psychological challenges for single mothers (Afdal et al., 2022).

Single mothers in Madura, in particular, face additional burdens related to social stigma and a lack of resources, which can impact their confidence in taking on the role of digital caregivers. Previous studies have noted that parental involvement in school and in their children's digital lives significantly contributes to parental confidence in digital parenting (Livingstone et al., 2017). With increasing digital literacy among children, parents, including single mothers, are

equipped with both challenges and opportunities. Research by Smith-Etxeberria et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of positive relationships between divorced parents, which can contribute to their children's emotional health and mitigate the negative impact of divorce.

Women who become single mothers after divorce often face significant psychological and social challenges in implementing digital parenting for their children. The psychological dynamics experienced by single mothers after divorce generally involve complex emotional factors. This study aims to examine the psychological dynamics experienced by single mothers in Madura in digital parenting after divorce, focusing on the strategies they use to protect and support their children in this complex digital world. This is expected to provide deeper insights into the experiences of single mothers in the region and develop relevant recommendations for future support programs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the psychological dynamics of digital parenting for single mothers in Madura after divorce. This method was chosen because it can provide a deep understanding of the psychological conditions of single mothers in implementing digital parenting for their children. This approach is highly effective in exploring complex issues related to childcare, especially in a dynamic context such as digital parenting.

The research was conducted in Madura, and six single, divorced mothers participated. The criteria for inclusion included single mothers who were currently raising children. The sampling process used a purposive sampling technique, where researchers selected and recruited participants who were able to provide relevant information regarding their digital parenting practices.

Data were collected using in-depth interviews and observations. The interview technique used was semi-structured. Observations were conducted within the family environment to gain further context regarding the psychological dynamics of single mothers and the interactions between mothers and children, including the use of technology in parenting. This data collection procedure is expected to provide comprehensive and comprehensive information regarding the psychological dynamics of single mothers in digital parenting.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques developed by Braun & Clarke (2006), in which researchers identified key patterns emerging from the collected data. The thematic analysis process was conducted iteratively, with categories and subcategories continuously refined based on feedback from the analyzed data. This study also used triangulation to validate the data, combining findings from interviews and observations to increase the accuracy and credibility of the research results.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis Phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase	Phase Name
Phase 1	Familiarising with data
Phase 2	Generating initial codes
Phase 3	Searching for themes
Phase 4	Reviewing themes

Phase 5	Defining and naming themes
Phase 6	Producing the report

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research results indicate that the psychological dynamics of Madurese single mothers after divorce can be classified into two main stages: (1) early post-divorce phase and (2) the adjustment phase to digital parenting. Each of these stages reflects the emotional and psychological changes experienced by the research participants in facing their new role as single mothers. Interviews with the participants revealed that each stage is characterized by distinct psychological dynamics, depending on the context and timing of the adaptation.

Early Post-Divorce Phase

In the early post-divorce phase, most single mothers experience significant psychological stress. They face various forms of parenting stress, particularly related to the burden of responsibilities they must shoulder alone, such as providing for their children, making decisions within the family, and assuming the dual role of mother and father. During this phase, the majority of Madurese single mothers experience negative emotional states. They feel unprepared to handle the dual role of breadwinner and full-time caregiver. Furthermore, social pressure, societal stigma, and the loss of their partner's support exacerbate their psychological distress.

Several single mother research participants revealed they experienced negative emotional states such as pessimism, hopelessness, and a sense of loss of direction in life. Uncertainty about the future and anxiety about the well-being of their children were major sources of emotional and psychological stress. During this phase, the psychological dynamics of single mothers were dominated by feelings of inadequacy, mental exhaustion, and internal struggles over changes in social status and disrupted interpersonal relationships due to divorce.

> " When I first got divorced, I felt devastated. I didn't know where to start. The kids were still young, and I was working. The exhaustion wasn't just physical, but emotional as well. My thoughts were all over the place" (P2).

> " Sometimes I wonder if I can continue living like this. My kids are fussy, I'm stressed, and the neighbors are gossiping. I felt hopeless at the time." (P6).

The Adjustment Phase in Digital Parenting

After passing through the early phase after divorce, Madurese single mothers begin to exhibit more diverse psychological dynamics. The emotions they experience are no longer entirely negative, but fluctuate and contextual, depending on the successes or challenges of implementing parenting styles, particularly in the context of digital parenting. Although their emotional dynamics remain volatile, they are beginning to develop parenting strategies,

particularly to address the challenges of digital parenting. Their emotional responses to their children are influenced by their children's use of technology, such as smartphones.

During this phase, single mothers expressed feelings of sadness when faced with difficulties controlling their children's gadget use. Some also became angry when their children exhibited negative behavior influenced by digital content. Conversely, single Madurese mothers expressed joy and happiness when their children demonstrated positive developments, such as the ability to learn independently through digital media or demonstrate responsible behavior in their use.

> " Sometimes I enjoy watching my child study on his phone, watching video lessons on his own. But there are also times when I get angry when he plays games too much and loses track of time." (P5)
>
> " I've already told my child not to play on his phone. If he obeys, I'm relieved. But if he's not using his phone, I get tired of constantly getting angry. Sometimes I can be patient, but there's a limit, right." (P2).

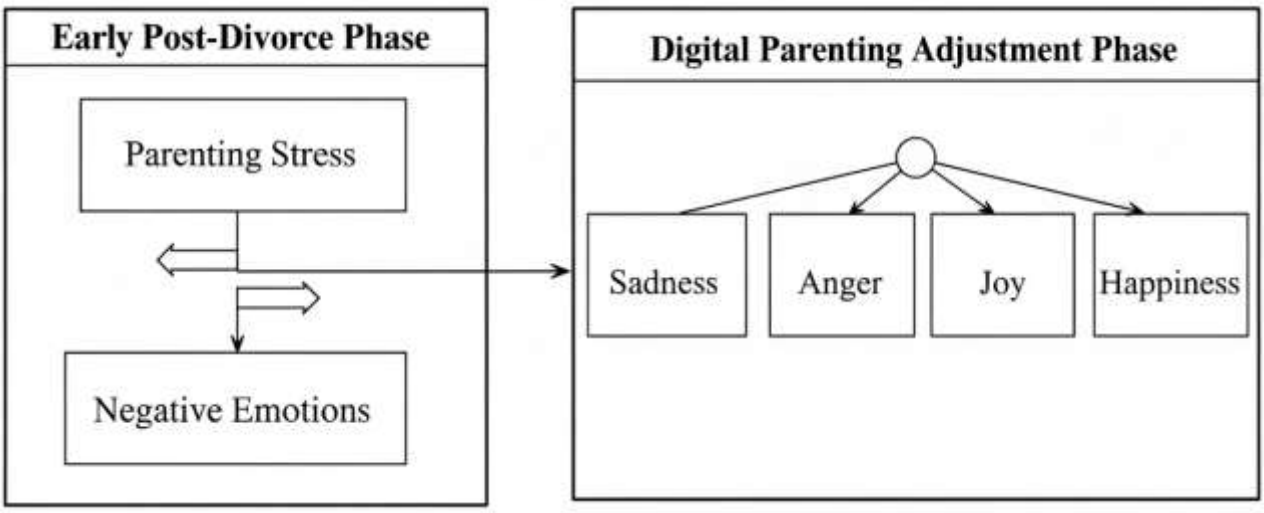


Figure 1. The Psychological Dynamics among Post-Divorce Madurese Single Mothers

Overall, the psychological dynamics of Madurese single mothers experience a transition from post-divorce emotional distress to a more stable form of adjustment, although it remains dynamic in line with the parenting challenges they face in the digital era.

DISCUSSION

The research results indicate that the psychological dynamics of Madurese single mothers experience two main phases: the initial post-divorce phase and the adjustment phase in digital parenting. These findings align with previous theories and studies that highlight how a person's emotional state changes following the adaptation process to significant stressors, such as divorce.

In the early post-divorced phase, study participants exhibited signs of psychological stress such as emotional exhaustion, pessimism, and feelings of helplessness. This aligns with the concept of coping with stress developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which explains that when individuals face stressful life events (such as divorce), they tend to experience high levels of psychological distress before they are able to effectively adjust.

Single mothers often face significant challenges in childcare, which can lead to emotional distress and stress. In these circumstances, it is crucial for single mothers to establish social relationships that can serve as a source of support to address the emotional challenges and stress of parenting (Meier et al., 2016). This is important because not all single mothers have the same access to social support as married couples.

From a psychological perspective, parenting stress can lead to negative outcomes such as pessimism and depression. Fatimah and Junanah (2021) found that single mothers often experience cognitive distortions that worsen their mental health, including feelings of hopelessness and excessive stress due to parenting. According to them, effective coping strategies are essential to help single mothers overcome the challenges they face in daily life. Conversely, single mothers are more likely to experience negative emotions such as loss of direction and hopelessness (Fatimah & Junanah, 2021).

Other research has shown that in the context of parenting, single mothers experience higher levels of stress than married couples. This is because the presence of a father in a child's life can improve the quality of parenting and reduce the stress faced by the mother (Jackson et al., 2013). Parenting stress is often exacerbated by external factors such as low socioeconomic status of the family. Other findings indicate that single mothers face greater challenges in coping with this stress compared to mothers with husbands (Xu et al., 2024). In the Madurese context, where local culture and values can reinforce the stigma against single mothers, the implications of perceived pressure can be even greater.

Overall, single mothers (both Madurese and single mothers in general) face complex psychological challenges that often create a cycle of negative emotions and parenting stress. Interventions designed to provide them with better emotional and social support can play a significant role in helping them overcome these challenges, while improving their well-being and the quality of care they provide to their children (Jackson et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2023).

After passing the early phase, mothers began to demonstrate more adaptive emotional adjustments and parenting strategies, although their emotions remained fluctuating (sadness, anger, happiness). This variation reflects forms of emotional and problem-focused coping, in which single mothers begin to regulate their reactions to unavoidable situations and attempt to manage digital parenting in a more structured manner.

Digital parenting is becoming a new factor in the emotional dynamics of single mothers. A study by Livingstone & Helsper (2008) showed that in the context of modern families, digital parenting can create new tensions between control and trust in children, which impacts parents' emotional stability.

Single mothers often face complex emotional adjustments in parenting, especially in today's digital age. Research shows that parenting amidst the use of technology and digital communication can increase the spectrum of emotions experienced by single mothers, including sadness, joy, anger, and happiness. These emotional experiences are strongly influenced by their daily interactions with their children and the broader social context. Azad et al. (2022) revealed that children's responses based on acceptance of their sadness and anger increase mothers' emotional self-esteem and enhance parents' emotional understanding, making this aspect a key aspect of one's emotion regulation techniques, allowing them to adapt more flexibly to external events.

Other findings suggest that greater parenting demands on mothers compared to fathers can exacerbate mental health risks. Mothers often feel more stressed and emotional than fathers due to greater responsibilities and lack of support (Woolf-King et al., 2017). These findings suggest that single mothers, in their digital parenting, may experience frustration and anger when faced with challenges, such as limited resources to support their parenting effectively. In such situations, negative emotions can become more dominant if not managed well.

The relevance of mother emotional regulation and self-confidence is crucial for addressing parenting challenges, which significantly impact their mental health (Dinni & Ardiyanti, 2020). Mothers with higher self-confidence tend to be better at managing stress and negative emotions in parenting. Therefore, education on emotional management techniques and increasing self-confidence for single mothers is crucial in supporting their well-being.

Furthermore, in the context of digital parenting, mothers' emotional responses can be influenced by the patterns of interaction they develop with the digital environment. Hoffmann et al. found that interventions for maternal depression can have a positive impact on their children's behavior and emotions, creating a positive cycle within the family dynamic (Hoffmann et al., 2022). If single mothers can find ways to use digital platforms not only as a means of information but also as a tool for building supportive social connections, this may help mitigate the negative emotions they face.

Single mothers' emotional adjustment to digital parenting practices is a complex phenomenon that spans a spectrum of emotions. This highlights the need for a holistic approach to supporting single mothers in maintaining their mental and emotional health. Interventions focused on enhancing self-confidence, emotional regulation, and positive use of technology will go a long way in creating a more fulfilling and fulfilling parenting experience for both them and their children.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the psychological dynamics of post-divorce Madurese single mothers in digital parenting occur in two main phases. The Early Post-Divorce Phase is characterized by significant psychological distress, where mothers experience parenting stress and are burdened by negative emotions such as sadness, anger, and anxiety. Over time, they transition to the Adjustment Phase in Digital Parenting, where although negative emotions remain, their intensity decreases and they begin to be replaced by more

positive feelings such as joy and happiness. In this phase, single mothers adaptively begin to utilize digital technology as a tool to facilitate better communication, seek social support, and ultimately find a new emotional balance.

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