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### IMPACT OF SINGLE MOTHER FAMILY ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW LITERATURE

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#### ABSTRACT

Transform family system from two-parent into a single-parent family system need a variety of adjustment, particularly when two parent divorce. There are several types of single-parent family system, but most are headed by women. Single parent system caused by parental divorce may affect children either short or long-term and positive or detrimental. Short-term effects include behavior difficulties at home and at school that occurs in association with the initial reaction to parental separation. Long-term effects may not appear until adolescence or adulthood when individuals become involved in intimate relationship and experience difficulties in establishing them. Need a strategy and intervention to children with single parent system.

#### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there was a rapid and drastic increase in the number of single-parent families around the world. This change can be happened in several ways: (1) divorce, desertion, or separation of adults; (2) death of an adult; or (3) giving birth to an illegitimate child. Divorce is the most common reason for the increasing numbers of this situation. In the United

States, about 85 percent of all single-parent families are headed by women and 16 percent of men. According to Ernisch and Wright (1989a), there was  $\frac{3}{4}$  of single parent are single mothers who carry an out-of-wedlock pregnancy and thus are not married their partner. The increasing numbers of this number and problems problem being faced by them should be highlight. The theories of child development also mentioned that the divorce is distressing for children because it involves conflict between parent and usually ending with separation. Besides, after divorce, children usually stay with their mothers even their fathers are more likely to get custody today than in previous generations. A divorce can harm children in many ways, ranging from school achievement to adjustment. The impact of divorce stems from less supervision of children, economic hardship, and conflict between parents. Children often benefit when parents have joint custody following divorce or when they live with the same-sex parent. The transformations of the two-parent family system into a single-parent family system are marked by a variety of adjustment and particularly when it creates the new system (Faye et al., 2015). There are several types of single-parent family system, but most are headed by women. Single parent system caused by parental divorce may affect children either short term or long term effect. The short term effect such as behavior difficulties at home or at the school. The long-term effects may influence their life by bad experienced or traumatic experienced.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Source**

A systematic approach to searching and identifying relevant literature was taken and the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis) was used to guide this process (Moher et al., 2009). However, this is not a systematic review in the strictest sense, instead we have used PRISMA to ensure the methods and reporting is as transparent as possible. A large amount of literature relating to single mother family and child development is included in the grey evidence base and on Internet-based resources. The review reported here focuses only on the peer-reviewed literature. We considered these papers to have the most to offer a discussion which develops the concepts of single mother family and child psychological development.

### ***Search and Eligibility Criteria***

A systematic literature review was conducted to search for all studies in the past 10 years that reported the results of single parent or single mother family and child development. The following inclusion criteria were established: (a) must be published in English, (b) must be published in a peer-reviewed journal, and (c) must have been published between 2010 and November 2020. A 10-year time frame was chosen to ensure that the latest and most relevant single mother and child development were included. The following electronic databases were searched: (a) Academic Search Complete, (b) Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Collection, (c) PsycINFO, (d) Social Work Abstracts, (e) Sociological Collection, (f) Social Services Abstracts, and (g) the Web of

Science. A methodological process of searching each database was conducted, using three sets of terms (“Single Parent” AND Child Development OR “Child Psychological Development” AND Single Mother OR Child Mental Health).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Finding The Impact of Single Parents on Children*

The disruption, conflict, and stress will associate with divorce affect children. Children can feel distressed, shocked, angry, rejected, guilty or relieved. They can feel embarrassed because their family is not like other families. Young children (example Hamid), especially those under eight, are the most likely to feel guilty. They wonder, in all seriousness, whether their own behaviour caused one parent to leave them. ‘if I’m good, will Daddy come back?’ ‘did Mummy go away because I was naughty?’. Perhaps they can remember telling one parent to go away and when the parent does go away, the child can feel responsible. Similarly, a child can feel he or she been ignored by a parent who has left the family. Hassan had visited his father every weekend for several years, but could say ‘I still feel hurt that my father left me.’ Some children also feel emotionally rejected by the remaining parent, who won’t listen and doesn’t seem to understand the child’s distress. Slightly older children are more likely to feel angry, especially with the parent whom they see as responsible for the family breaking up. They are sometimes angry with the parent they live with for apparently doing nothing to bring back the other parent. Children who see their mother or father crying can feel great concern for their parent, and long to comfort them, their parent’ burden as well as their own. Other children feel sad for the parent who is alone and lonely, and they sometimes blame the parent they live with for turning the other one out. ‘I thought it was rotten of my seven, seldom saw his father but was aware that his father must be lonely. Young as he was, he felt a lifting of responsibility when he heard that another woman was now living with his father. ‘I felt good that someone else was looking after him,’ he told me. After separation, a child may feel insecure. Young children might think that, if one parent has gone, perhaps the other parent will also disappear. This situation will make the children become very clinging, fearful of losing sight of the remaining parent (Eldar et al., 2009). It is important for the parent to keep promises. If they tell children that they will be home by four o’clock, then it is essential that they are. Another important point is not to make more changes that are essential. A child will feel more secure if some things remain unchanged like home, friend, school, and daily life. If possible, the daily program of meal-times, bed-time, and other activities should continue as before. Regarding to Choi et al. (2014), this routine will give a strain on that parent because the need to handle extra responsibilities in one times. Single parent need to provide a meal, supervise homework, take children to after-school activities, read to or play with the children and get them to share and put to bed. Although they need to do all those thing alone but their children expect them to provide that all to be done. If some things have to be changed, try to explain why. Try to keep some routines the same, or at least in the same order. Daughters of divorced mothers

despite feeling relatively less secure around males and having the most negative views of their fathers reported spending the most time with boys. Daughters of divorced mothers were more likely to seek the attention of the male chaperones, more likely to initiate contact with boys and more likely to spend time in the boys' areas of the recreation centre. Hetherington (1972) has discussed that divorce affects children through multiple routes. Some effects of divorce are linked directly to the father's absence. When a father is absent, girls have fewer opportunities to learn how to interact with males. But other effects of divorce depend upon the mother's attitudes and feeling. When children of divorced parents become adults, the effects of divorce persist. As adults, children of divorce are more likely to become a teenage parent and to become divorced themselves. The study also shows less satisfaction with life and are more likely to become depressed (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Some children are more affected by divorce than other. Amato (2001) analysis, for example, showed that although the overall impact of divorce is the same for boys and girls, divorce is more harmful when it occurs during childhood and adolescence than during the preschool or college years. Arnato and Cheadle (2005) mentioned that children who are temperamentally more emotional tend to be more affected by divorce. Regarding to others researcher, certain kinds of reactions that vary according to the children's age when parental divorce occurs (Arnato,1996). Those reactions are outlined in the following sections. Preschool-age children react differently, depending on their age at the time of the parents' divorce. The group's reactions to the divorce ranged from displaying regressive behaviours to increased aggressiveness, fretfulness, confusion and negative attention-getting action. According to Arnato (2000), regressive behaviour occurred more frequently among preschoolers who had not been informed about the father's impending withdrawal from the family system. Only half of the children in the middle age group showed regressive behaviour, but many children were reported to be whiny, irritable, fretful and aggressive to other. The more advanced level of cognitive development among these children led them to be mistrustful of the stability of their relationships with adults. Some also reported feeling responsible for causing their parents' divorce. Older preschool-age children displayed anxiety, irritability, restlessness, and moodiness following parental divorce. This group had been expected to make a better degree of adjustment than the younger children. Children with the most serious and disruptive stressful reactions to parental divorce had parents who were involved in serious adversarial disputes (Wellerstein, 1985). In the first year after parental divorce, the situation is getting difficult and stressful (Hetherington, 1985). However, the disruptive effects experienced by young children often continue to experience greater degrees of disruptiveness than girl do, especially if parents continue to experience a high level of discord and conflict. Children are described as being angry with one parent or both for causing the divorce and the many disruptions they feel have occurred in their lives. Many school-age children have pervasive fears and high levels of anxiety that interfere with school performance. Some worry about being forgotten by their noncustodial parent, although very few believe that they have caused their parents' divorce. Peer relations are also adversely affected. Children of divorced parents are more likely to be rejected by a peer, especially if these children experience a high level of stress related to the divorce and other associated changes in

family life. They may be either overly aggressive in peer interactions or withdraw from activities with other children which can also contribute to peer rejection. Many school-age children are especially concerned about the possibility of parental divorce in their family. When it occurs, school counsellors report that family problems are a leading factor in the suicidal behaviour of the children this age. A child's sex continues to mediate differences in reaction to parental divorce and in the length of time required for adjustment to divorce. The boy shows more adverse reaction (behaviour problem and difficulties) compared to girls. During a child's school-age years, the length of time required for adjustment to divorce may long-term rather than short-term. Research indicates that the behaviour problems observed among children whose parents have divorced during these years are associated with the negative life changes produced by the divorce. These problems continue to be observed for 6 to 10 years after the divorce. Although some positive adjustments occur during this period, many individuals feel that their parents' divorce continues to play an influential role in their current lives. Other effects of divorce on school-age children include their greater involvement in household responsibilities and changes in interaction patterns with both parents (Devall et al., 1986). Like preschoolers, school-age children frequently experience role and boundary shifts in their relations with their mothers. Adolescents' reactions to divorce differ from those of young children. Observed reactions vary according to a number of factors. The turmoil and bitterness of a conflict-ridden, emotionally strained marriage can cause more inner turmoil and emotional upset for an adolescent than the experience of the parental divorce itself (Wallerstein, 1985; Sweeney & Bracken, 2000). According to observers, adolescent reactions to divorce typically include the following: fear of abandonment, rejection, and loss of love from the noncustodial parent (Demo & Cock, 1996). Interference with psychological and developmental progress is important issues in establishing self concept, traumatic experience and fear of failure in their own future marriages, delinquent and problem behaviours, high levels of conflict with parents and also difficulties with academic performance and emotional depression. Observers also mentioned that the regressive behaviours, hostility and sexual acting-out behaviours among early adolescents whose parents are divorcing (Krumrei et al., 2011). However, some of adolescents have develop a variety of positive styles for coping with the stresses associated with parental divorce (Boring et al., 2015). Armistead et al. (1990) also mentioned that the sex of a teenager also plays a part in the way he or she reacts to parental divorce. Slater et al. (1983) also identify that the teenage boys from divorced families have better self-concepts and better perceptions of the family environment than those from intact homes. However, this does not appear to be the case among adolescent girls. One of the more troublesome aspects of an adolescent's reaction is the high risk and probability of behaviour problem (Doherty & Needle, 1991; Reichertz & Frangkel, 1990). Teenagers may act out their frustrations and anger or cope with the stressfulness of parental divorce by using recreational drugs, participating in promiscuous sexual activity, smoking cigarettes, driving recklessly and so on. Perhaps because of the father's absence from the family system and the single-parent mother's employment after divorce, a teenager often seems to have less supervision. This creates more challenges to the mother's parental authority and more

disruption in family life, which continues to add to teen behaviour problems. Girls may experience more serious difficulties than boys do. Some research suggests that teenage girls may project anger about their non-custodial fathers onto their custodial mothers. These girls may also experience role reversal and blurring of boundaries between themselves and their mothers, a situation previously described among school-age girls in a similar situation. Adolescent girls may resent this change in their relationship with their mothers. It is also not unusual for some adolescents to have divided allegiances to both parents (Monahan et al., 1993). This division relates to the high level of conflict and hostility and a low degree of cooperation between parents. As a result, many teenagers feel caught between loyalties to individual parents and researchers have noted that poor levels of adjustment are related to the disruptive changes associated with parental divorce.

Many single-parent mothers experience changes in their relationships with their children. In general, there may be few differences in the relationship between mothers and daughters and mothers and sons in single-parent family systems when children are young. However, children in family systems that include single-parent mothers continue to experience adjustment difficulties 4 to 6 years following the parental divorce, as compared with children whose mothers have remarried. One effect of role strain on single-parent mothers is an increased reliance on more authoritarian patterns of interacting with children. As the new family system evolves new patterns and is able to establish some degree of stability, single-parent mothers generally shift to patterns of child-rearing that are more authoritative. This tends to promote healthier, more positive adjustment among children. After the divorce, it is not unusual for single-parent mothers to institute changes in the boundaries, patterns, and rules that define the usual adult and child role behaviors. A mother may expect that child to be more mature than he or she is developmentally ready to be (Lipman et al., 2002). Accordingly, the child's role becomes transformed; he or she is now the mother's confidant. The mother increasingly relies on this child's for emotional support and assigns him or her much of the missing adult partner's responsibilities. As a result, the child may be forced into interaction patterns that call for the developmental maturity that he or she does not have or is not prepared to provide for the mother (Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell, 1987).

The pressures that children experience in these situations come from not having their emotional need met by their mothers, who are usually unaware of this problem. When a mother transforms the child's role to one similar to the absent adult partner's, a conflict can emerge that imitates the marital conflict with the former spouse. The child discovers that he or she is in a no-win situation—pressured to assume the missing partner's role but punished for behaving like the former spouse (Hetherington et al., 1985). Some researchers also report a particular interaction between mothers and daughters. At the time, they may experience competition, jealousy, and conflict that are not found between single-parent mothers and sons (Hetherington, 1972; Living et al., 2007). When children find themselves in these situations, some may not feel comfortable expressing their feeling of frustration and confusion. More likely, they respond with psychosomatic reaction and acting-out behavior that

serve as symptoms of their concerns and fears. Not surprisingly, when mothers disclose intimate details about personal problems, such as financial matters or negative feelings about ex-husbands, daughters report a strong feeling of emotional distress. Compared to children in two-parent families, those being raised in single-parent families have lower IQ and achievement test scores (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Storksen et al., 2005), more often repeat a grade, more often drop out and less often go to college. In fact, living in a single-parent family substantially increases the likelihood of being a high school drop-out and diminishes the likelihood of attending college even when current family income and mother's education are held constant. Living in a single-parent family is also problematic for students' classroom behavior and adjustment (Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Children's academic success depends partly on their social and emotional adjustment but the overlap between children's cognitive and affective growth has prompted little large-scale research. Still, whether children attend school regularly and are well-behaved can matter a great deal for their long-term academic prospects, especially in first grade, because their adjustment to the student role has large and lasting effects on their test scores and marks. These children also display more disruptive behavior in class, receive more problem referrals and rate lower in social skill, "personality", homework completion and study habits than do children in two-parent homes.

### ***Social Intervention***

Therapists (social workers, psychologist, counselor) and researchers with single-parent families note that certain pitfalls may be encountered by parents that can present clinical issues including responding to children as a reminder of the former spouse, developing over dependencies on children, seeing children as a burden and the tendency to focus on surviving rather than on parenting children and attempting to meet their developmental needs. One study, however, questions the pathological implications of most studies of single mothers for leaning on children for emotional support and advice. This study reports that adult children instead viewed this as contributing to a sense of equality, closeness, and promotion of friendship with their mother. Rather than constituting boundary violations, these interactions may help from the researcher's point of view, to build strength in single-parent families headed by women. However, more work will need to be done to fully substantiate this view. An organization that focuses on the interests and need of single parent may offer many opportunities for therapeutic support, services, information, and education. In Indonesia and Malaysia for example, these organizations, such as Parents Without Partners (PWP), *Persatuan Ibu Tunggal* (Single Mother Association) and program offered by local family life councils or religious groups, are commonly found in large urban settings. Therapeutic support groups can also provide assistance for single parents. They are based on group therapy approaches and may be specifically intended to address aspects of the single-parent experience. These elements include learning the new role, dealing with stress, planning careers, addressing legal issues, developing home-maintenance skills and so on. Children from single-parent families may also benefit from support groups available in their school system. These groups are helpful to children as they learn to cope with the various

disruptions occurring in their life due to their parents' divorce such as special programs may assist adults as well. Some children may need in-depth psychotherapy with a competent therapist in order to address some of the more serious problems that can occur in reaction to divorce: emotional depression, substance abuse, eating disorders and so on.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we hope that each party will pay attention to the single mother issue by giving professional training to a social worker, psychologist and counsellor. So that, they can play their role well in helping or giving psychosocial intervention and counselling to these children that rise up in single mother family. Most of social workers, psychologist and marriage counsellors are all carefully selected and trained for their work. They are warm, accepting people who are easy to talk and trust. Social workers, psychologist and counsellors do not normally give advice, but help their clients to understand themselves and their difficulties and to discuss what they should do. Therefore, family conference and conciliation are important. Family conciliation means helping people to reach an agreement and to resolve disputes with as little bitterness as possible when their marriages have broken down. In particular, conciliation services help parents who have a problem with the future arrangements for their children.

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