

CHILDRENS RESILIENCE IN SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES: A Case Study in Tanjung Alam Village Asahan Regency

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the forms and factors that influence the resilience of children growing up in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village, Asahan Regency. Resilience is understood as the ability of individuals, in this case children, to survive, rise, and adapt positively despite facing pressure or life difficulties, such as the condition of an intact family. This research approach is qualitative with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of several children from single-parent families as well as related parties such as parents and community leaders. The results show that children's resilience is formed through a combination of internal factors such as self-confidence, motivation, and hope for the future, as well as external factors such as emotional support from parents, social involvement, and a supportive school environment. Despite facing economic deprivation and psychological burdens, most children demonstrated good adaptive skills. This finding confirms the important role of the environment in supporting children's psychological resilience in non-ideal family conditions.

Keywords: Single-Parent Families, Psychological Resilience, Social Support

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bentuk dan faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi resiliensi anak yang tumbuh dalam keluarga orang tua tunggal di Desa Tanjung Alam, Kabupaten Asahan. Resiliensi dipahami sebagai kemampuan individu, dalam hal ini anak, untuk bertahan, bangkit, dan beradaptasi secara positif meskipun menghadapi tekanan atau kesulitan hidup, seperti kondisi keluarga yang tidak utuh. Pendekatan penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi terhadap beberapa anak dari keluarga orang tua tunggal serta pihak-pihak terkait seperti orang tua dan tokoh masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa resiliensi anak dibentuk melalui kombinasi faktor internal seperti kepercayaan diri, motivasi, dan harapan masa depan, serta faktor eksternal seperti dukungan emosional dari orang tua, keterlibatan sosial, dan lingkungan sekolah yang mendukung. Meskipun menghadapi keterbatasan ekonomi dan beban psikologis, sebagian besar anak menunjukkan kemampuan adaptif yang baik. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya peran lingkungan dalam mendukung ketahanan psikologis anak dalam kondisi keluarga yang tidak ideal.

Kata Kunci: Keluarga-Orang Tua Tunggal, Ketahanan Psikologis, Dukungan Sosial

INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest social unit that plays an important role in shaping a child's personality and well-being. Within the family, a child first learns about values, norms, habits, and social behaviors that will form the basis of their personality. As the first place where children interact intensively, the family becomes the primary environment that influences the formation of a child's character, morality, and emotional stability. The main function of the family, especially in terms of parenting and education, greatly determines the direction of a child's overall growth and development (Supriyadi et al., 2022). Not only in terms of physical development, the family also plays a major role in shaping cognitive, affective, and social aspects. Parents, as the main figures in the family, are responsible for providing protection, love, supervision, and continuous emotional support (Purwanti & Susanti, 2021). When these functions are optimally carried out, children will grow up feeling secure, confident, and have good social skills.

However, families that are unable to perform their functions properly can cause various problems for children, such as behavioral disorders, low self-confidence, and difficulties in social interaction (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Child welfare is not only seen from the fulfillment of material needs, but also from the fulfillment of emotional and psychological needs (Nurzabrina &

Netrawati, 2023). A harmonious, caring, and communicative family environment provides a strong foundation for children's mental health and well-being (Harahap & Siregar, 2020). Conversely, disharmony in the family can disrupt a child's emotional stability, causing anxiety, stress, and even depression. Thus, the influence of the family on a child's development is enormous, because the family is the first place where children feel love and support, which influences the formation of their personality.

From a religious perspective, especially Islam, the role of the family is very important. Islam emphasizes that the family is a place full of love and care, as well as the first environment for children's education. In the Qur'an, Allah mentions the importance of protecting the family from various kinds of evil, including the fires of hell. This verse shows that families have a great responsibility to protect and educate their children to become pious individuals, both in terms of morals and worship. The family is not just a place to live or a blood relationship, but also a place to learn basic values in life, such as love, morality, and faith. Therefore, family education in Islam is not only about fulfilling the physical needs of children, but also educating them in spiritual and moral matters, which are the foundation for shaping children's character (Dewi, 2022).

Although the role of the family in educating and guiding children is very important, the reality on the ground

shows that not all children grow up in intact families. One phenomenon that is increasingly common in society is single-parent families, whether due to divorce, the death of a spouse, or other reasons. The presence of a nuclear family consisting of a father, mother, and children in carrying out parenting functions greatly affects the well-being of children, but in reality, many children have to grow up without one of their parents. The phenomenon of single-parent families has become a topic of increasing concern, especially given its impact on child development. Children who grow up in single-parent families often face various psychological, social, and economic challenges that are not easy to overcome (Mika Oktaviana, 2022).

Children raised by single parents face various pressures that children from intact families may not experience. One of the main challenges they face is the emotional burden of losing one parent, which often causes feelings of loneliness, confusion, or even shame. In addition, economic limitations are often an additional problem, as children from single-parent families tend to be more vulnerable to difficult economic conditions. However, there are many children from single-parent families who are able to overcome these challenges and grow up to be resilient and successful individuals. This phenomenon is known as resilience, which is the ability of individuals to bounce back, adapt, and thrive despite facing difficulties or trauma (Sabanari & Huwae, 2025). Resilience is an important factor that can determine

whether children from single-parent families can grow and develop positively, or be hindered by the pressures they experience.

The process of resilience in children from single-parent families is very complex and involves various factors. Social support from the surrounding environment, such as extended family, friends, or community, plays an important role in helping children cope with their difficulties. Warm parenting and the attention given by single parents also greatly influence children's ability to cope with the emotional pressures they face. Children who feel accepted, loved, and supported by their parents or other family members tend to have higher levels of resilience. In addition to , children's involvement in social and educational activities can also give them a sense of purpose and pride that supports their resilience development (Mishra et al., 2021; Ottiliah et al., 2025). In this regard, substitute figures such as grandparents or close relatives can also play a very important role in supporting children's development, providing them with a sense of security, and ensuring that they do not feel the loss of a parental figure. The existence of strong social support is very important for children from single-parent families, as it gives them a sense of belonging and importance amid the pressures they face (Fossati et al., 2019; Han, 2023).

This study focuses on how resilience is formed in children raised by single parents in the village of Tanjung Alam,

Asahan Regency, which has the characteristics of a rural community with strong family values. Although this village still upholds family values, the challenges of modernization and changes in family structure also influence the development of children in this village. Therefore, it is important to explore the factors that support or hinder resilience in children growing up in single-parent families. This study aims to explore in depth how the process of resilience is formed in these children, as well as identify the factors that influence their development.

This study is expected to provide deeper insights into the psychosocial dynamics faced by children from single-parent families, especially in the context of rural social and cultural settings. In addition, the results of this study are expected to form the basis for formulating appropriate interventions to support the development of these children, whether through government policies, educational programs, or social support from the community. By understanding the challenges faced by children from single-parent families and the factors that support their resilience, it is hoped that there will be more effective measures in providing the necessary support to ensure that they can grow and develop optimally despite facing various difficulties.

METHOD

This study was designed to explore how resilience is formed in children raised by single parents in Tanjung Alam Village, Asahan Regency. A qualitative approach

with a case study type was chosen for this study. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the factors that influence resilience in children raised in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village. Case studies were chosen because this approach allows researchers to explore in detail the daily life context of these children and the psychosocial factors that play a role in shaping their resilience (Creswell, 2007).

This study involved seven children raised in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village, Asahan Regency. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, where the sample was selected based on specific criteria, namely children who lived with one parent due to divorce, death of a spouse, or other reasons. The sample size was determined based on the principle of saturation point, where the number of participants is considered sufficient to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data collection procedure was conducted using in-depth interviews, which allowed researchers to explore more detailed information about the children's life experiences, challenges, and factors that support or hinder their resilience. Interviews were conducted with children who had obtained permission from their parents or guardians, as well as with several other key informants, such as family members, teachers, or neighbors who could provide additional perspectives on the lives of

these children. In addition, participatory observation was also carried out to obtain contextual data on social interactions and family dynamics that influence child development.

After the data was collected, the analysis was carried out in three stages: first, data condensation, which is the process of summarizing and condensing information from interviews and observations to find the main themes. Second, data display, which is the arrangement of data in a more structured form to facilitate understanding and identification of emerging patterns. Third, verification, which is the process of verifying data through discussions with informants and further analysis to ensure the validity of the research findings. Data triangulation was also used to increase the credibility of the findings by comparing the results of interviews with the results of observations and perspectives from various sources (Miles et al., 2014).

In maintaining data validity and reliability, this study uses the member check technique, which gives participants the opportunity to review the interview results and ensure that the researcher's interpretation is consistent with their experiences. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality and research ethics, all participants provided informed consent before participating in this study. All data obtained will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the factors that influence

resilience in children raised by single parents in rural villages, as well as to explore the ways in which they cope with the psychosocial challenges they face. The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights for educators, policymakers, and the community in supporting the development of children in single-parent families.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Psychosocial Conditions of Children Living in Single-Parent Families

This study involved seven children aged 10–17 years living in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village, Asahan Regency. The single parents in this study consisted of widows and widowers due to divorce or death of their spouses. The economic backgrounds of the families varied, but most were in the lower-middle class category. The children studied had formal educational backgrounds and were active in school and village social activities. This study aimed to explore the psychosocial conditions of children living in single-parent families and to understand how factors such as emotional conditions, social relationships, self-concept, and responsibility contribute to the formation of their resilience.

The emotional condition of children raised in single-parent families showed significant changes since the initial transition. Most children experienced emotional tension characterized by sadness, excessive anxiety, and a sense of loss, especially in

the early stages of family structure change. This transition process is often an emotionally challenging moment, especially when children have to accept the fact that they only have one parent who has to replace the roles of two. One of the most striking expressions of children is their longing for the absent parent, especially the father. However, over time, children show the ability to adapt and manage these feelings. They begin to learn to accept the situation and focus on the positive things in their lives, even though negative emotions such as sadness and longing still arise from time to time. The emotional support provided by the remaining parent, both in the form of attention and emotional closeness, plays an important role in helping these children manage their feelings (Mhd. Habibu Rahman, 2020; Rahma, 2020).

Regarding social relationships, this study reveals two main trends that influence children's ability to interact with their surroundings. Children who receive emotional support from extended family or peers tend to be more open and adaptable in social situations. They feel accepted and are able to build positive social networks, which become a source of strength in overcoming life's challenges. Conversely, children who face social stigma, such as negative comments about their family status, often withdraw and reduce their social interactions. This has a negative impact on their self-confidence. For example, a teacher revealed that some children from single-parent families tend

to be quieter and less confident, especially when the topic of family is discussed. However, there are also children who are able to develop more quickly in terms of social responsibility, such as taking care of younger siblings or helping with household chores, which shows that not all children from single-parent families are hindered in terms of social interaction. This shows that positive social support, both from extended family and peers, plays an important role in shaping children's resilience (Bahri & Muzaki, 2021; Lorenza et al., 2023).

Children's self-concept and self-esteem are also greatly influenced by how they are treated by their surroundings. Children who feel accepted and valued by their friends and community tend to have a positive self-concept. Conversely, those who often face discriminatory treatment, such as being teased for not having a father or mother, tend to experience a decline in self-esteem. They feel different and tend to be more sensitive to negative views from their social environment. However, over time, many of these children show an increase in self-esteem after receiving positive affirmation from teachers or other adult figures. One of the children interviewed said, "I used to feel inferior, but now I think not everyone has a perfect life." This statement reflects how external reinforcement, such as support from teachers or friends, can help these children change their views of themselves and increase their self-esteem. It also indicates the importance of the role of

adults in providing emotional support and building self-confidence in children from single-parent families (Mulyani, 2018).

Children from single-parent families show a higher level of social maturity compared to children from intact families. Many of them are accustomed to helping with household chores, looking after younger siblings, or even contributing to the family's economy through part-time work. This level of maturity shows that these children have learned to be independent earlier than their peers who live in intact families. However, this early maturity also carries a heavy psychological burden. One child said, "I can't play like my friends because I have to help my mother sell goods in the afternoon." This reflects how the responsibilities carried by these children, while making them more independent, also reduce their opportunities to enjoy their childhood. If not managed properly, this burden can have an impact on their mental health in the future. Therefore, it is important to provide appropriate support so that these children are not overwhelmed by excessive responsibilities (Dewi, 2022).

The academic performance of children raised by single parents varies. Some children experience a decline in learning motivation, especially in the early stages after the change in family structure, which is often followed by emotional disturbances. However, with consistent support from the school or community, their learning motivation can recover.

Children who have clear life goals and receive encouragement from single parents to continue their education tend to have higher academic motivation. This study shows that despite the difficulties they face, children from single-parent families can show significant academic progress if they receive sufficient support (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Support from the social environment, both family and school, plays an important role in maintaining the academic motivation of these children, which in turn affects their quality of life in the future.

Overall, the results of this study show that although children from single-parent families face various emotional and social challenges, they also show resilience in dealing with them. Factors such as emotional support, a positive social environment, and the ability to adapt to existing situations contribute greatly to the formation of their resilience. Therefore, it is important for society and relevant parties to provide greater support to children from single-parent families, whether in the form of emotional, social, or academic support.

Resilience of Children in Single-Parent Families

Based on interviews conducted with village heads, this study reveals that the resilience of children in single-parent families is influenced by several key factors. One of the most significant factors is social support. Children who have strong social networks, such as extended

family, peers, and teachers, show higher levels of resilience. They feel supported and do not feel alone in facing life's challenges. In Tanjung Alam Village, support from extended family, including grandparents, uncles, or aunts, often serves as a substitute for the missing parental figure. Their presence provides more than just material support, but also consistent affection and attention. This is very important in children's emotional development, as they feel valued and not abandoned in the face of difficulties. This study also confirms that children who feel a strong connection with other supportive adult figures, whether in their family or community, are better able to cope with life's difficulties and show resilience in facing the problems they encounter (Marbaniang et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2021; Otiliah et al., 2025).

In addition, religiosity also plays an important role in increasing the resilience of children in single-parent families. Religious values instilled from an early age provide children with strong mental and emotional resilience in facing psychological pressures. In observations of children in Tanjung Alam Village, many of them are active in religious activities, such as regular prayers, reading the scriptures, or attending religious lectures. Their involvement in these religious activities gives them a deeper sense of hope and meaning in life. The belief that every difficulty has a lesson, and that God always provides a way out, strengthens their inner resilience in facing all

challenges. This belief not only helps them manage their emotions but also gives them a more positive perspective on life. Along with the religious values taught, many children show better self-control, especially in terms of patience, honesty, responsibility, and hard work. This shapes a more stable, disciplined character that is able to persevere in less than ideal situations (Angeline & Rathnasabapathy, 2023; Catedral et al., 2025; Wakeel et al., 2025).

In addition to social support and religiosity, another factor that influences children's resilience in single-parent families is open communication with their single parent. Research findings show that children who have communicative and open relationships with their single parents tend to be better able to manage stress and show optimism. In some cases in Tanjung Alam Village, children who regularly talk with their parents—whether through daily activities such as eating together or light discussions before bed—appear to be better able to control their emotions and are more open to help. In some situations, these children even become emotional partners for their parents, which strengthens their emotional bond and sense of mutual responsibility. Open and regular communication also reduces the likelihood of children feeling isolated and helps them cope with the psychological pressures that arise from having a single parent in their lives.

The aspect of independence also emerges as an important factor in shaping resilience in children from single-parent families. Many children demonstrate the ability to solve their own problems because family circumstances force them to be more independent. In Tanjung Alam Village, many children from single-parent families demonstrate quite mature problem-solving skills despite their relatively young age. For example, some children manage their own study time without parental supervision, help their younger siblings study, or make small decisions related to their daily needs. This shows that even though they are in less than ideal circumstances, they are able to overcome challenges and become more independent. This independence not only helps them deal with everyday problems, but also gives them a strong sense of responsibility and the ability to persevere in challenging circumstances. However, although this independence provides many benefits, sometimes it also adds psychological burdens on children, as seen in some children who feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities they bear (Fossati et al., 2019; Greeff & Fillis, 2009; Tobe et al., 2019).

The results of this study indicate that the level of resilience among children in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village varies, depending on the strength of the existing social support network and the individual characteristics of the child. In line with Mika Oktaviana's research (Misriani et al., 2024; Rees et al., 2023), it

was found that resilience does not only come from within the child, but is also influenced by the environment that supports them. This finding also reinforces Enjelita Putri Sabanari's statement (2025) that consistent and supportive adult figures can be a major protective factor in the development of at-risk children. In the local context, the presence of grandparents or religious leaders plays an important role in replacing the role of absent parents.

The psychosocial conditions of children in single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village reflect both vulnerability and potential for adaptation. Despite facing emotional and social challenges and early responsibilities, many children show high resilience. These children must adapt to the reality that they do not have two parents who play an active role in their lives. This has implications for the emergence of emotional and social vulnerabilities, such as feelings of loss and loneliness. However, they also demonstrate the ability to thrive in less than ideal situations. Key factors that influence their psychosocial condition include the presence of supportive figures, an inclusive social environment, and open communication patterns within the family. Children who have the opportunity to express themselves and gain recognition from their parents or community tend to have greater resilience in facing difficulties (Bahtiar Siregar, 2023; Han, 2023; Schalkwyk & Gentz, 2023).

Therefore, it is important to provide greater support to children from single-parent families so that they can develop optimally, both emotionally, socially, and academically.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the psychosocial conditions of children from single-parent families in Tanjung Alam Village are influenced by various interrelated factors, such as social support, religiosity, communication within the family, and independence. Children who have strong social networks, such as extended family and peers, tend to show higher levels of resilience because they feel supported and not alone in facing difficulties. The emotional support provided by extended family, such as grandparents or other adult figures, plays an important role in overcoming the emotional vulnerability that arises from single parenthood. In addition, religiosity also provides significant emotional resilience, with children who are involved in religious activities showing better ability to manage stress and maintain optimism. The psychosocial conditions of these children are also influenced by open communication with their single parents. Children who regularly talk to their parents have better ability to manage emotions and stress, and are more adaptable to changes in the family. On the other hand, independence formed from an early age, despite carrying a psychological burden, also strengthens children's resilience in facing life's challenges.

Overall, these findings show that external factors, such as social support and communication within the family, have a major impact on the formation of resilience in children from single-parent families. The implication of this study is the importance of providing greater support to children from single-parent families, whether from extended family, school, or community, so that they can develop optimally. The formation of resilience in these children does not only depend on internal factors, but also on a supportive environment.

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