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The Relationship Between Optimism and Peer Support on the Resilience of Adolescents Who Have Lost A Parent

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Abstract: This study aims to empirically examine the relationship between optimism and peer support on the resilience of adolescents who have lost a parent. Participants were adolescents aged 12-18 who had lost a parent due to the death of one or both (orphans, orphans, orphans). This study used a quantitative correlation method. The sampling technique used was quota sampling, with a sample size of 100 respondents. Data collection tools included resilience scales, optimism scales, and peer support scales. The results of the minor hypothesis analysis on the optimism and resilience variables yielded an rx1y of 0.662 and a p-value of 0.000 (p<0.01), with an effective contribution of 43.8%. This indicates a highly significant positive relationship between optimism and resilience in adolescents who have lost a parent, thus accepting the first hypothesis. The minor hypothesis analysis on the peer support variable and resilience yielded an rx1y of 0.581 and a p-value of 0.000 (p<0.01), with an effective contribution of 33.7%. This indicates a highly significant positive relationship between peer support and resilience in adolescents who have lost a parent, thus accepting the second hypothesis. The correlation coefficient for the three variables, rx12y, was 0.743 and a p-value of 0.000 (p<0.01), with an effective contribution of 55.3%. This indicates that the major hypothesis is accepted, indicating a highly significant relationship between optimism and peer support and resilience in adolescents who have lost a parent.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, often viewed as a turbulent period in which individuals struggle to discover their identity (Sari, 2017). According to Monks (Sari et al., 2022), adolescence spans from ages 12 to 21, subdivided into early (12–15), middle (15–18), and late adolescence (18–21). This stage is often marked by emotional turbulence due to hormonal changes, making it essential for adolescents to receive proper support, particularly from their parents (Wendari et al., 2016). Parental warmth and guidance play a significant role in helping adolescents regulate their behavior (Sari & Sano, 2019), emphasizing the importance of close family presence during this stage (Wendari et al., 2016). The family, as the smallest social unit consisting of father, mother, and children (Sari & Ningsih, 2022), plays a central role in supporting adolescents through cognitive, social, and emotional transitions (Hulukati, 2015).

In real life, however, not all adolescents are privileged with continuous parental support. One of the most painful and challenging experiences during this developmental period is the loss of a parent. According to UNICEF (2020), approximately 2.5 million children around the world lose a parent each year due to disease, accidents, or conflict. By

2020, about 153 million adolescents had lost one or both parents (Elya & Widyatno, 2022), and this kind of loss often brings permanent emotional voids (Ramadhan & Ardias, 2019). Holmes and Rahe classify the death of a parent as a significant life stressor that requires major personal adjustment (Ramadhanti & Surjaningrum, 2022), a process commonly referred to as grief (Puspasari in Calsum & Purwandari, 2024). Grief is the emotional reaction to the loss of someone important (Anwar & Nur, 2023), and losing a parent can be more traumatic than divorce (Santrock in Fadhil & Mardianto, 2024). Such trauma can severely disrupt an adolescent's ability to adjust and function in daily life (Fadhil & Mardianto, 2024).

The emotional toll of losing a parent in adolescence is not only theoretical but also evident in real-life incidents. Kompas.com (2022) reported a case of a 22-year-old attempting suicide after the loss of both parents. Feelings of guilt, anger, depression, and detachment from others are common responses (Andriessen et al., 2018). Hasanah (2020) emphasized that this kind of deep stressor often negatively impacts future developmental stages. Adolescents who lose parents frequently face financial and emotional hardship and may struggle to find purpose or direction (Saputri et al., 2024). Many need considerable time to adapt to these changes, and their capacity to recover is known as resilience—a dynamic process that allows individuals to cope with challenges while maintaining health and energy (Suprapmanto et al., 2023).

Resilience is defined as an individual's ability to recover and adapt after experiencing a traumatic event (Prasetya et al., 2024). It reflects a person's healthy and productive response to adversity, including the capacity to navigate hardship and emerge stronger (Pratiwi & Yuliandri, 2022). Hertinjung et al. (2022) further describe resilience as a process of effective adaptation and positive response when facing trauma, which strengthens psychological endurance. Adolescents with higher resilience can use positive emotions to better manage challenges and make decisions (Elya & Widyatno, 2022). Puspasari (2020) suggests that resilient adolescents tend to be more optimistic, adaptive in solving problems, and capable of moving forward, while those with low resilience may experience anxiety, self-doubt, and depression (Rismandanni & Sugiasih, 2019).

The researcher interviewed several respondents to explore how adolescents adapt to parental loss. Respondent F (21) lost her father in 2023, which led to immense sadness, a sense of burden, and isolation. She took on the role of head of the household while studying, which made it difficult to think positively about the future. Respondent W (17) became withdrawn after her mother died four years ago. Her initial openness turned into emotional detachment, anger, and difficulty forming new support bonds. She often isolates herself and avoids emotional expression. Respondent J (21), who lost his father at the age of eight, still struggles 13 years later. He described persistent sadness, envy of peers with living fathers, and difficulty adapting socially, which hindered his development of optimism and resilience.

One of the factors that influences resilience is optimism. Nashori & Saputro (2021) identify optimism as a critical contributor to individual resilience. Scheier and Carver describe optimism as a belief in positive outcomes, which drives individuals to persist toward their goals (Sari & Eva, 2021). Optimism fosters adaptive responses to adversity and enhances resilience (Puspasari, 2020). Optimistic individuals maintain hope and positive expectations even during hardship (Janah et al., 2022), whereas pessimists tend to expect negative outcomes (Putri & Pohan, 2020). Research by Chang confirms that optimistic individuals rely more on problem-focused coping strategies and seek social

support (Nasution et al., 2024), reinforcing the importance of optimism as a protective factor.

Besides optimism, peer support also plays a vital role in shaping adolescent resilience. Nashori & Saputro (2021) mention peer support as another influential factor. Social support involves care, empathy, appreciation, and tangible assistance from others (Sarafino, 2011). Cohen and Syme describe it as a mutual relationship involving trust, help, and recognition (Dianto, 2017). According to Hamonangan et al. (2021), it is the presence of others who show love and concern for the individual. Support from peers helps adolescents understand themselves and cope with challenges more effectively (Dianto, 2017). Peer support instills confidence, value, and motivation, making adolescents feel capable of overcoming problems (Ekasari & Yuliyana, 2012).

Empirical studies reinforce these insights. Muhammad, Bahri, and Zuliani (2018) found that peer support significantly enhances adolescent resilience in Banda Aceh. Similarly, Sari and Ningsih (2022) reported that peer support positively correlates with resilience among adolescents from broken homes. These findings highlight the dual importance of optimism and peer support in fostering resilience among adolescents dealing with parental loss. Therefore, this research aims to empirically examine the relationship between optimism and peer support with resilience in adolescents who have experienced parental loss due to death. The results are expected to contribute theoretically by enriching developmental psychology literature and practically by providing insights for affected adolescents and future researchers to better understand and address psychological recovery in such contexts

LITERATUR REVIEW

Resilience

Resilience is a personal trait that enables individuals to thrive despite adversity, encompassing six core virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence (Connor & Davidson, 2003). It is defined as the capacity to respond to challenges or trauma healthily and productively, which is essential for managing everyday life stressors (Dewi et al., 2020). Psychologically, resilience also refers to the flexible ability to adapt to changing situations and recover from negative emotional experiences (Dewi et al., 2020). Moreover, resilience is viewed as the capability to overcome difficulties, ultimately guiding individuals toward success (Ramadhani, 2022), and as the strength to endure and adapt in the face of unfavorable or problematic circumstances (Ramadhani, 2022). In summary, resilience can be understood as the inner capacity to recover and persevere through hardship or traumatic events.

According to Nashori and Saputro (2021), the five aspects of resilience are: (1) personal competence, (2) Trust in others and have tolerance for negative emotions and resilience in dealing with stress, (3) Positive acceptance of change and having secure relationships, (4) self-control, (5) spirituality. The aspects used as the basis for the resilience scale in this study are those proposed by Nashori and Saputro (2021).

Based on Nashori and Saputro (2021) the eleven factors influencing resilience are: (1) age and gender, (2) socioeconomic status, (3) personality traits, (4) religiosity, (5) stress coping, (6) self-efficacy, (7) emotional intelligence, (8) optimism, (9) gratitude, (10) parenting style, (11) social support. The selection of the first independent variable, namely optimism, refers to the research of Musafiri and Umroh (2022), while the second

independent variable, namely peer support, refers to the research of Calsum and Purwandari (2024).

Optimism

Optimism is defined as an inner belief and hopeful attitude toward the future. It involves the tendency to expect positive outcomes and view challenges as opportunities rather than threats (Sari & Eva, 2021; Ratnawati, 2018). As a component of positive psychology, optimism is associated with emotional well-being, reduced stress, and stronger social relationships (Ratnawati, 2018). Seligman describes it as a thinking pattern that attributes experiences to positive causes and anticipates favorable outcomes (Khoirunnisa & Ratnaningsih, 2016). Optimistic individuals maintain hope for good results even in difficult situations (Fahlevi et al., 2022), and they tend to see life events positively, believing that things will ultimately turn out in their favor (Ghufron & Risnawati, 2010). Thus, optimism can be summarized as a self-guided belief that all situations hold potential for good, accompanied by confidence in facing challenges and setbacks.

According to Seligman (in Ratnawati, 2018), the three aspects of optimism are: (1) permanence, (2) pervasiveness, and (3) personalization. Meanwhile, Scheier and Carver (2018) identify three additional aspects: (4) positive expectancies, (5) emotional resilience, and (6) long-term perspective. The aspects used as the basis for the optimism scale in this study are those proposed by Seligman (Ratnawati, 2018).

Peer Support

Peer support is a form of social support that comes from individuals of the same age group, providing emotional, practical, and social assistance to enhance individual wellbeing. It plays a role in helping individuals socialize effectively and solve personal problems (Saputro & Sugiarti, 2021). According to Taylor (in Sari & Indrawati, 2016), social support from peers helps individuals feel cared for and valued. Similarly, Sarafino and Smith (in Kalisha & Sundari, 2023) define social support as the sense of comfort, appreciation, concern, or help received from others or groups. Ogden (in Indrayana & Kumaidi, 2021) also explains that social support is often perceived as feelings of comfort, attention, and self-worth gained through assistance from others.

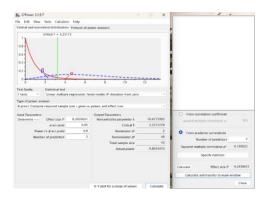
According to Sarafino and Smith (2011), the four aspects of peer support are: (1) emotional support, (2) instrumental support, (3) informational support, and (4) companionship support. Taylor (2018) adds four more aspects: (5) tangible assistance, (6) informational support, (7) emotional support, and (8) invisible support. The aspects used as the basis for the peer support scale in this study are those proposed by Sarafino and Smith (2011).

METHODS

This study used a quantitative correlation research method with a Likert scale as the data collection instrument. Quantitative research, as defined by Abdullah et al. (2021), is a systematic investigation of a phenomenon through the collection of data measured using statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. The measurement scale used in this study is to quantify variables numerically, thereby increasing accuracy, efficiency, and clarity (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). The Likert scale was chosen to assess individual attitudes, opinions, and perceptions towards certain social phenomena, which are operationalized into indicators for developing item statements (Sugiyono, 2013). This study used three scales to represent each variable: a resilience scale, an optimism scale, and

a peer support scale consisting of positive and negative statements according to the Likert scale. The population, as defined by Sugiyono (Soesana et al., 2023), is a generalization area consisting of subjects or objects with specific characteristics determined by the researcher for study and conclusion drawing. It encompasses the total number of subjects relevant to the research focus (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). Thus, the population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects possessing certain characteristics in line with the research objectives. This population becomes the central focus for the researcher to examine and form the basis for concluding findings. In this study, the population consists of individuals who have experienced the loss of a parent.

The sample is a subset of the population that shares similar characteristics (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). According to Sugiyono (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021), the sample represents a part of the population along with its defining characteristics, while Husain & Purnomo (Hardani et al., 2020) define it as selected members of the population based on sampling techniques. The researcher determined the optimal sample size using G*Power version 3.1.9.7, considering an initial effect size f² of 0.15, alpha error probability of 0.05, statistical power of 0.8, and two predictors.



Picture 1. G*Power Analysis for Minimum Sample Size

R Squared values from previous studies Osmayeni and Taufik (2024) for optimism ($R^2 = 0.43$) and Putri and Rusli (2020) for peer support ($R^2 = 0.105$) were entered into the analysis, resulting in a final effect size of 0.2436651 and a minimum required sample size of 43 respondents. The sampling technique used was non-probability quota sampling, in which respondents must meet predefined characteristics (Amruddin et al., 2022). For this study, the sample criteria included adolescents who lost a parent due to death, with a total of 100 respondents set as the sample size (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 provide an overview of the characteristics of the respondents in this study. Participants came from various demographic backgrounds, including age and gender. This diversity reflects a representative sample of the population of adolescents experiencing parental loss, thus strengthening the external validity of the study results. This diverse sample composition also allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Table 1. Description of Respondent Character Before Outlier

Character	Description	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Female	65	65%	
	Male	35	35%	
Age	12	6	6%	
C	13	10	10%	
	14	4	4%	
	15	8	8%	
	16	9	9%	
	17	18	18%	
	18	8	8%	
	19	10	10%	
	20	15	15%	
	21	12	12%	

Table 2. Description of Respondent Character After Outlier

Character	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	34	69.4%
	Male	15	30.6%
Age	12	5	10.2%
_	13	9	18.4%
	14	1	2%
	15	3	6.1%
	16	7	14.3%
	17	10	20.4%
	18	7	14.3%
	19	1	2%
	20	1	2%
	21	5	10.2%

Respondents in this study will be grouped into early adolescent, middle adolescent, and late adolescent categories according to Monks' development theory (Sari et al. 2022).

Research Finding

The present study involved adolescents in Kudus who had experienced the loss of one or both parents due to death. These individuals were either categorized as orphans, fatherless, motherless, or double orphans. A total of 100 participants were initially recruited, but after outlier analysis, the final sample size was reduced to 49 adolescents. The demographic analysis indicated that 69.4% of the participants were female and 30.6% were male. In terms of age, most participants fell within the middle adolescence category (16–18 years), comprising 35% of the sample, followed by early adolescents (12–15 years) at 28%, and late adolescents (19–21 years) at 37%. These data suggest a wide developmental range, which could influence how adolescents perceive optimism, peer support, and resilience in the context of parental loss.

The descriptive statistics and assumption testing using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 revealed that the data distributions for the three variables—optimism, peer support, and

resilience—met the assumptions of normality. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test yielded significance values greater than 0.05 for all three variables, indicating normally distributed data. Furthermore, linearity tests showed that both optimism and peer support had a linear relationship with resilience, with significance levels (p > 0.05) supporting linearity assumptions. These results allowed for the subsequent implementation of correlation and regression analyses to test the proposed hypotheses regarding the interrelations among the studied psychological constructs.

The major hypothesis testing using multiple regression analysis revealed a highly significant relationship between optimism and peer support with resilience (R = 0.743; p < 0.01). The effective contribution (R^2) of both predictors to resilience was 55.3%, indicating that more than half of the variance in resilience among adolescents who lost their parents could be explained by their levels of optimism and perceived peer support. This finding confirms the theoretical framework that resilience is a multidimensional construct shaped by both internal (optimism) and external (peer support) protective factors. Therefore, fostering optimism and strengthening social support systems may substantially enhance adolescents' capacity to recover from emotional adversity.

Furthermore, the minor hypothesis testing revealed a significant positive correlation between optimism and resilience, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.662 (p < 0.01). This suggests that optimism independently contributes 43.8% to the variance in resilience. Adolescents with high levels of optimism are more likely to interpret adversities, such as the loss of parents, as temporary and manageable challenges rather than permanent setbacks. This psychological disposition enables them to maintain motivation, envision a hopeful future, and engage in adaptive coping mechanisms that enhance emotional endurance and psychological well-being.

Lastly, the second minor hypothesis test also demonstrated a significant positive correlation between peer support and resilience (r = 0.581; p < 0.01), contributing 33.7% to the variance in resilience. Adolescents who perceived strong emotional, informational, instrumental, and companionship support from their peers reported higher levels of resilience. These findings highlight the critical role of social connections during adolescence, a developmental stage where peer relationships become central to identity formation, emotional regulation, and overall psychological stability. Peer support may mitigate feelings of isolation and helplessness following the loss of a parent and serve as a buffer against stress, enabling adolescents to navigate grief and life transitions more adaptively.

Hypothesis Result

The hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 27, beginning with the major hypothesis which examined the combined influence of optimism and peer support on resilience among adolescents who have lost one or both parents. The results of multiple regression analysis showed a significant effect, with F = 28.414 and a significance level of p = 0.000. The R-value of 0.743 indicates a strong correlation between the predictors and the outcome variable. The model explains 55.3% of the variance in resilience, as shown by the R^2 value of 0.553. This means that both optimism and peer support jointly serve as strong predictors of resilience, emphasizing the importance of integrating personal and social factors in understanding how adolescents cope with grief.

Table 3. Major Hypothesis Test (Regression Analysis)

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig
1 regression	0.743	0.553	0.533	7.931	28.414	0.000

Table 3 shows the major hypothesis testing results, indicating a strong and significant model where optimism and peer support explain over half of the variance in resilience. The first minor hypothesis tested the relationship between optimism and resilience using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The result showed a correlation coefficient of r = 0.662 with a significance value of p = 0.000, confirming a highly significant and positive relationship. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.438$) suggests that optimism alone contributes 43.8% to the variance in resilience. These results imply that optimism, as an internal strength, plays a vital role in helping adolescents adapt positively during difficult times, providing them with hope and future-oriented motivation after experiencing parental loss.

Table 4. Minor Hypothesis 1 – Correlation Between Optimism and Resilience

Variable	R	R2	Sig (p)
Optimisme*Resiliensi	0.662	0.438	0.000

Table 4 demonstrates a strong, positive, and significant correlation between optimism and resilience. Adolescents with higher optimism tend to show better emotional adaptability. The second minor hypothesis assessed the relationship between peer support and resilience, and the analysis also utilized Pearson correlation. The result indicated a significant positive correlation, with r = 0.581 and p = 0.000. The R^2 value of 0.337 shows that peer support independently explains 33.7% of the variance in resilience. This supports the argument that adolescents who receive emotional, informational, and companionship support from peers are more likely to be resilient. Peer support acts as a buffer against stress and emotional instability, especially in times of bereavement.

Table 5. Minor Hypothesis 2 – Correlation Between Peer Support and Resilience

Variabel	R	R2	Sig (p)
Dukungan teman sebaya*Resiliensi	0.581	0.337	0.000

Table 5 shows that peer support is significantly related to resilience. The more peer support adolescents perceive, the better their capacity to bounce back from adversity. To enrich the interpretation of these findings, the categorization of data for each variable was examined. For optimism, 32.65% of respondents were categorized as moderate, while 10.20% were in the very low category. Regarding peer support, 38.78% were in the high category, with 6.12% in the very low category. In terms of resilience, the majority (34.7%) fell within the moderate category, while only 4.08% were categorized as very low. These categorizations offer valuable insight into the distribution of psychological strengths among participants and reinforce the statistical findings from the hypothesis tests.

Table 6. Variable Distribution by Category

Variable	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Optimism	10.20%	28.57%	32.65%	18.37%	10.20%
Peer Support	4.08%	38.78%	28.57%	22.45%	6.12%
Resilience	10.20%	22.45%	34.70%	28.57%	4.08%

Table 6 illustrates the percentage of participants in each category across the three main variables. Most participants were in the moderate-to-high range, indicating overall adaptive profiles, though some remained at risk. In conclusion, the hypothesis testing results clearly demonstrate that both optimism and peer support are significantly and positively related to resilience in adolescents coping with parental loss. The major hypothesis confirmed that these variables together account for over half the variance in resilience outcomes, while the minor hypotheses showed their individual contributions. These findings reinforce the critical need to cultivate both personal traits like optimism and environmental resources such as peer relationships to strengthen psychological resilience in vulnerable adolescent populations.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that optimism and peer support play in fostering resilience among adolescents who have experienced the loss of one or both parents. The results of the major hypothesis test demonstrated that optimism and peer support collectively account for 55.3% of the variance in resilience, highlighting the combined power of internal and external protective factors. Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable stage of development, characterized by identity formation, emotional fluctuations, and the search for belonging. The presence of optimism enables adolescents to maintain a forward-looking perspective despite the challenges of bereavement, while peer support provides the social scaffolding necessary to endure and adapt to these life-changing experiences. This dual influence aligns with prior studies, such as Lestari & Widiana (2021), which similarly found that optimism and social support jointly contribute to increased resilience.

The strong positive correlation between optimism and resilience (r = 0.662) found in this study supports previous research, including (Osmayeni & Taufik, 2024), which identified optimism as a key predictor of resilience among children from divorced families. Optimistic adolescents are more likely to view hardships as temporary and solvable, rather than permanent obstacles. They tend to exhibit proactive coping strategies, such as problem-solving and seeking support, rather than resorting to avoidance or withdrawal. Optimism functions as a cognitive filter that reframes negative events into manageable challenges, reducing feelings of helplessness and promoting psychological growth. This is particularly crucial for adolescents who are grappling with the emotional aftermath of parental loss, as it allows them to construct positive narratives about their future and maintain a sense of purpose.

Peer support emerged as another significant contributor to resilience, with a moderate-to-strong positive correlation (r = 0.581). This finding is consistent with research by (Rismandanni & Sugiasih, 2019), who observed that peer relationships play a critical

role in the emotional adjustment of adolescents separated from their parents. During adolescence, peers often become the primary source of emotional validation and companionship, sometimes surpassing the influence of family. Supportive friendships provide adolescents with a safe space to express grief, share personal struggles, and receive encouragement, which collectively enhances their ability to recover from trauma. In contrast, the absence of peer support can exacerbate feelings of isolation and hinder emotional healing, as indicated by the 6.12% of participants in this study who reported very low levels of peer support.

The data distribution across categories of optimism, peer support, and resilience provides additional insight into the psychological state of the participants. While the majority of adolescents fell within the moderate-to-high categories, a notable percentage still reported low or very low levels of these constructs, indicating a need for targeted interventions. For example, the 10.20% of participants with very low optimism may benefit from cognitive-behavioral strategies aimed at reframing negative beliefs and cultivating hope. Similarly, the 4.08% of participants with very low resilience highlight the importance of building social and emotional skills, potentially through peer-based support groups or mentorship programs in schools and community centers.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal a highly significant relationship between optimism and peer support with resilience among adolescents who have lost one or both parents. Optimism, as an internal factor, and peer support, as an external factor, play a vital role in helping adolescents recover, adapt, and live positively after such a major loss. Adolescents with higher levels of optimism and peer support tend to be more resilient, better at managing their emotions, and more hopeful and motivated about their future. Conversely, low levels of optimism and peer support may lead to greater vulnerability, including feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and difficulties in psychological and social adjustment.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that adolescents be encouraged to cultivate optimism and maintain belief in a meaningful and achievable future. Empowering them through positive activities that help build new life purpose and set realistic goals is also essential. For future research, it is suggested to include additional variables such as spirituality or family support to provide a more comprehensive understanding of resilience among adolescents who have experienced parental loss.

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