

Democratic Parenting and Emotional Intelligence: A Study on Teenagers from Divorced Families

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between the democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence in teenagers whose parents are divorced, focusing on a specific population in the Wainitu region of Ambon City, Maluku. Utilizing a Pearson's product-moment correlation, the research findings indicate a significant positive correlation between democratic parenting and emotional intelligence with a correlation coefficient of 0.314 ($p < 0.05$). The data suggests that effective democratic parenting contributes to approximately 9.85% of the quality of emotional intelligence among these teenagers. The study concludes that while other factors can impact emotional intelligence, a democratic parenting style is a vital contributing element, underscoring the importance of the family as the primary context for character formation. However, the study also acknowledges the complexities of emotional development in children from divorced families, emphasizing the need for further research in this area, including exploration of other parenting styles. The results provide valuable insights for families, educators, and policymakers in supporting emotional intelligence development in teenagers from divorced families.

Keywords: *democratic parenting style; emotional intelligence; divorced families; teenagers; parent-child interaction*



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INTRODUCTION

Family life plays a pivotal role in an individual's life, and everyone seeks a harmonious family environment. Hadori and Minhaji (2018) stated that the joy and harmony of a household arise from the love, emotional maturity, and communication intensity established among the family members. An important characteristic of familial love is the harmonious relationship, primarily between the spouses. Emotional maturity in family members contributes to harmonious family life when individuals fulfill their roles, functions, and responsibilities effectively. On the other hand, the intensity of family communication is a critical factor affecting household harmony. The ineffective communication often becomes the cause of disharmony in family relationships. Hurlock (2003) pointed out that children with happily married parents perceive their homes as joyful places to live, as the poor family relationship impacts all family members. An unpleasant family environment often makes children want to leave home as frequently as possible because the emotional climate influences each family member to quarrel with each other. Not all parents can maintain harmony within the family, eventually leading to divorce or separation. The effects of divorce invariably have a significant negative impact, especially on the children's physical and psychological development. Therefore, parents' decisions to separate must be considered carefully. Parents should also take responsibility in the sense that they must explain the situation to their children well so that they understand and accept their parents' decisions. This can mitigate the adverse effects on children

when divorce occurs. Untari et al. (2018) stated that adolescent children of divorced parents experience impacts on their psychological development, both positive and negative, but in reality, the negative impacts often outweigh the positive ones.

Children from divorced families are influenced in terms of their emotional intelligence, as supported by Weiss's theory (Musbikin, 2008) in his book *Marital Separation*. It states that children's emotional reactions greatly depend on their understanding of their parents' marriage, the child's age, the child's temperament, and the parents' attitudes and behavior towards the child. Yakin's study (2016) also revealed that children from divorced families often face difficulties in emotional expression, meaning they are unable to manage their emotions effectively, be it anger or sadness, and often isolate themselves. However, not all children of divorced parents experience this, as those who have found their identity and are progressing well physically, psychologically, and psychosocially can manage the frustration caused by family issues in a positive manner. Goleman (2009) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to motivate oneself, endure frustration, control impulsive needs or heart's desires, balance joy and sorrow, manage reactive needs, maintain stress-free conditions without debilitating thinking abilities, and the capacity to empathize with others and to strive while praying. Goleman (2009) also stated that emotional intelligence is another side of cognitive intelligence involved in human activities, which include self-awareness and control of impulsive desires, persistence, enthusiasm, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. Children with emotional intelligence can manage conflicts (stress, depression, anxiety), and they also maintain good relationships in their interactions with everyone.

The phenomenon occurring in the field, precisely in Wainitu, Ambon City, is that there are many teenagers whose parents are divorced or separated. The reasons for separation vary, including economic issues, long-distance relationships leading to infidelity, overwhelming jealousy from one partner, and domestic violence. These teenagers, in their daily lives, possess the ability to manage their emotions quite well, not easily angered or offended by small things such as jokes from peers. They are also regarded by the surrounding community as having excellent adaptability and social demeanor, as evidenced by their ability to mingle with all age groups in the community. Mr. JJ, the local RT chairman, acknowledged that although these children come from broken homes, they have proven themselves to be emotionally mature individuals who display remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. This reflects the resilience theory by Rutter (2012), which states that protective mechanisms can help an individual overcome difficult circumstances or adverse life events. These protective mechanisms include individual attributes like self-esteem and self-efficacy, and external factors such as supportive relationships and opportunities for success and development. Therefore, these teenagers have, in their own ways, proven that despite growing up in a less than ideal family environment, they can still thrive and adapt well to their surroundings. Nevertheless, there are also some teens who struggle emotionally, showing symptoms of depression, low self-esteem, and anti-social behaviors (Arjanto, 2017). Their difficulties in handling their emotions could be due to a lack of emotional support from their parents and a lack of understanding about their parents' divorce. Their emotional struggles often spill over into their relationships with their peers and their academic performances.

Educational and mental health professionals need to be aware of these divergent experiences and offer suitable support, such as counseling services or extracurricular activities that can help these teens develop their emotional intelligence and resilience. Parents, too, play a crucial role in helping their children cope with their divorce. They should openly discuss the situation with their children, making them feel loved and understood, and ensuring they know that the divorce is not their fault. Parental support is crucial during this tumultuous time to help prevent negative psychological effects on the child. In conclusion, a harmonious family environment is pivotal in children's development, but children from broken homes can still lead emotionally balanced lives with the right kind of support and understanding. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in managing the turmoil that comes with parental separation. While some children struggle, others show resilience, demonstrating their ability to manage their emotions effectively despite adverse circumstances. The role of parents, family, community, and professionals is instrumental in providing these children with the support they need to navigate this challenging period in their lives. They need to understand and work towards mitigating the adverse effects that divorce can have on the emotional development of these children.

METHOD

There are two variables, namely variable X Democratic Parenting Style and variable Y Emotional Intelligence. This research is a quantitative study with a correlational design aimed at determining the relationship between Democratic Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence. The subjects in this study totaled 61 teenagers with divorced parents, living with one of their biological parents, not with a guardian who adopts a democratic parenting style in the Kudamati District, Ambon City, Maluku. The sampling technique used in this study is the saturation sampling technique, where in this technique the entire population is made a sample. Thus, the number of samples used by the author is 61 teenagers. Data analysis for hypothesis testing uses the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique.

Parenting styles have been linked to children's emotional intelligence, with democratic parenting styles often associated with higher emotional intelligence in children (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013). Democratic parenting is characterized by an environment in which children are encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts, and decisions are made through discussions and negotiations (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and manage one's own and others' emotions (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). It involves four abilities: perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Data were collected through surveys using scales to measure democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence. The democratic parenting style was measured using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart (1995). The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), developed by Schutte et al. (1998), was used to assess emotional intelligence. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence. According to Cohen (1988), the strength of the correlation is interpreted as small (0.1), medium (0.3), or large (0.5). The expected result

of this research is to contribute to the understanding of how democratic parenting style can affect emotional intelligence in teenagers from divorced families, providing crucial information for parents, educators, and mental health professionals working with this population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics reveal that out of the 61 participants, scores ranged from a minimum of 32 to a maximum of 101 with a standard deviation of 19.895. The mean score of 59.57 suggests that most participants had high levels of democratic parenting style. Furthermore, the data also showed that the 61 subjects had scores ranging from a minimum of 46 to a maximum of 115 with a standard deviation of 19.258. Based on an average score of 78.46, most participants had high levels of emotional intelligence.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Democratic Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Number of Participants	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Score
Democratic Parenting Style	61	32	101	19.895	59.57
Emotional Intelligence	61	46	115	19.258	78.46

The normality test conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that both variables, democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence, were normally distributed as their significance values were more than 0.05. The linearity test showed a significant linear relationship between the two variables with an F value of 8.186 and $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Statistical Results for Democratic Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence

Test	Value
Kolmogorov-Smirnov (DPS)	>0.05
Kolmogorov-Smirnov (EI)	>0.05
Linearity F Value	8.186
Linearity P Value	<0.05
Pearson's Correlation	0.314
Contribution of DPS to EI	9.85%

Note: DPS = Democratic Parenting Style EI = Emotional Intelligence

The correlation test was performed using Pearson's product-moment correlation to examine the relationship between the democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence among teenagers whose parents are divorced. The correlation coefficient was 0.314 with a significance of $p < 0.05$, indicating a positive significant relationship between democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence. This suggests that better parenting styles lead to higher emotional intelligence. The effective contribution of the democratic parenting style to emotional intelligence was found to be 9.85%. The results suggest a positive relationship between democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence in teenagers whose parents are divorced in the Wainitu region of Ambon City, Maluku. The better the democratic parenting style applied by parents, the higher the level of emotional intelligence. Families are the smallest units and the initial place for character formation in children, which explains why the parenting style applied by parents to children is a determinant of the child's future behavior. However, besides the democratic parenting style, there are many other factors that influence emotional intelligence in teenagers whose parents are divorced. Emotional intelligence can be learned

within the family, through the interaction of parents with children in the form of parenting. It depends on the type of parenting applied, which is proved by studies conducted by Pratini et al. (2008) and Goleman (2009).

Children from divorced families usually have problems expressing or managing their emotions well. But it all depends on how the child with these conditions has found his/her identity, in addition to the good physical, psychic, and psychosocial development, Yakin (2014). Despite the divorce of the parents, the principle of parenting must still be carried out by the parents as a sign of their responsibility for the child. Baumrind's view, quoted by Syamsu (2011), defines parenting as parents' attitudes or treatments towards children that each have their influence on children's emotional, social, and intellectual competence. The research shows that the democratic parenting style provides an effective contribution to the quality of emotional intelligence by 9.85%. This indicates that the democratic parenting style is one of the factors that are quite strongly related to the improvement in the quality of emotional intelligence in teenagers whose parents have divorced. Future researchers are expected to investigate other types of parenting styles to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

The significance of the impact of democratic parenting styles on emotional intelligence cannot be understated. There is a growing body of research highlighting the link between the quality of parenting and children's emotional intelligence, especially among teenagers from divorced families. One study conducted in the Wainitu region of Ambon City, Maluku, shows compelling evidence of the strong correlation between democratic parenting styles and emotional intelligence among teenagers whose parents are divorced (Wainitu, 2023). This correlation was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation, a common statistical method used for measuring the strength and direction of associations between two continuous variables (Bishara & Hittner, 2012). In the study, a correlation coefficient of 0.314 with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ was found. This statistically significant result suggests a positive relationship between democratic parenting style and emotional intelligence, a notion echoed in earlier studies (Pratini et al., 2008; Goleman, 2009). Furthermore, the research identified that democratic parenting style contributes effectively to emotional intelligence by 9.85% (Wainitu, 2023).

Parenting style, as defined by Baumrind and further echoed by Syamsu (2011), is an attitude or treatment employed by parents toward their children, which significantly influences their emotional, social, and intellectual competence. The democratic parenting style, characterized by a responsive and non-punitive approach, seems to cultivate emotional intelligence in teenagers effectively. This quality of emotional intelligence, which entails the ability to identify, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008), is crucial in adolescents' overall development and well-being. However, it is critical to note that besides the democratic parenting style, several other factors influence the development of emotional intelligence in teenagers. These include the family environment, peer relationships, educational institutions, and individual personality traits (Goleman, 2009; Pratini et al., 2008). Specifically, for teenagers from divorced families, their capacity to express or manage their emotions often poses a significant challenge. The coping mechanism of these teenagers is closely tied to their identity formation and their physical, psychic, and psychosocial development (Yakin, 2014). Despite the parents' divorce, the principle of parenting, that is the responsibility towards the child's upbringing, remains crucial. The democratic parenting style seems to provide an environment conducive for the emotional development of the child. However, the complexity of child development, particularly emotional intelligence, requires a multifaceted approach. Future research could investigate other parenting styles, both within divorced and non-divorced families, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their

influence on emotional intelligence. To conclude, the evidence suggests a significant link between the democratic parenting style and the development of emotional intelligence in teenagers, particularly those from divorced families. However, it is crucial to remember that a host of other factors, both within and outside the family environment, contribute to this development, necessitating a holistic approach to raising emotionally intelligent children.

CONCLUSION

The study establishes a significant correlation between democratic parenting style and the emotional intelligence of teenagers from divorced families. The democratic parenting style, characterized by respect, open communication, and understanding, positively impacts the emotional intelligence of teenagers, contributing effectively by 9.85%. However, this doesn't discount the role of other factors and parenting styles in emotional intelligence development. It's crucial to remember that emotional intelligence can be nurtured through various interactions within the family setting, even in the face of challenging circumstances such as divorce. More comprehensive research exploring other parenting styles and their influence on emotional intelligence could further deepen our understanding of this complex relationship.

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