

“I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH! OR AM I?!” ADOLESCENTS’ SELF-ESTEEM AND EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY FOLLOWING PARENTAL DIVORCE

ALEXANDRA MAFTEI*, CĂTĂLINA ONOFREI, OANA DĂNILĂ
Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the potential impact of parental divorce on emotional instability, self-esteem, and attitudes toward divorce among late adolescents. We also explored the related potential gender differences. Our sample consisted of 136 participants aged 17 to 19 ($M = 17.86$, $SD = .80$), 66.2% females. All participants were students in their last two high-school years, and 30.9% came from divorced families. Our results suggested significant negative associations between the overall self-esteem and participants' emotional instability, regardless of the parental status (married or divorced). However, data suggested that participants from divorced families and females reported lower self-esteem and higher emotional instability. We discuss our findings regarding their implications for youth mental health following parental divorce.

Cuvinte-cheie: adolescenți; divorț; stimă de sine; instabilitate emoțională; tineri.

Keywords: adolescents; divorce; self-esteem; emotional instability; youth.

1. INTRODUCERE

The divorce rate is continuously increasing worldwide in the past decade (Lebow, 2019), impacting the entire family system, especially children (Van Dijk *et al.*, 2020). Most studies highlighted that, generally, children who come from divorced families experience higher levels of internalizing and externalizing behavioral and emotional problems (Weaver & Schofield, 2015), have more difficulties in their social relationships (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2018), and have lower levels of self-esteem (Størksen *et al.*, 2006) than children from intact families. According to the data reported by the Soros Foundation in 2011, 39% of Romanians disapprove of the idea of divorce, while 43% rank it as neutral, and 18% of the participants considered it an effective solution to end a non-working marriage. According to recent statistics, Romania has the second-highest marriage

* Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, Facultatea de Psihologie și Științe ale Educației, Departamentul de Științe ale Educației, Strada Toma Cozma, nr. 3, 700554, Iași, România; E-mail: alexandra.maftei@uaic.ro.

rate within the European Union and a divorce rate of 22.06% (Romania Insider, 2020).

Adolescents' attitudes toward divorce have been explored by previous studies, though the need for further research is generally highlighted in most of them. For example, Cartwright (2006) suggested that the participants (i.e., between the ages of 19 and 20, who experienced the separation of parents through a divorce in adolescence) considered the divorce to be an event with multiple negative emotional consequences, followed by difficulties in involving subsequent love relationships and diminishing family ties. In addition, Miles *et al.* (2010) suggested that parental opinions about it can influence youth's attitude toward divorce. Thus, if the parents have a favorable attitude, their children would most likely share their vision. At the same time, other studies suggested that young people from divorced families might be highly undecided regarding marriage and such commitments (Branch-Harris & Cox, 2015).

THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

Parental divorce is experienced differently by each child. The loss following a divorce can lead to aggressive behavior or a tendency to withdraw and isolate, in addition to guilt and potential perceived responsibility for the emotional rift between their parents (Gharaibeh, 2015). Generally, the consequences of divorce for children are visible in many areas. For example, studies have highlighted the negative impact on academic performance (Jeynes, 2012; Potter, 2010), physical health (Anderson, 2014), as well as emotional and behavioral problems (Hashemi & Homayuni, 2017). Despite a generally recognized increased risk for psychosocial issues generated by divorce, there is also a large inter-individual variability regarding children's adjustment to the post-divorce new family system (Amato & Anthony, 2014; Van Dijk *et al.*, 2020).

Some studies suggested that it is not the divorce that impacts the children the most, but more importantly, the uncertainty concerning the new roles assumed with the separation of the two parents and the way parental conflict is managed (e.g., Mackay, 2005). This is more important since children often mediate the communication between the parents, which might lead to intense emotional outcomes toward one parent or another, especially when directly witnessing conflictual scenes (Nazri *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, Jeyaseelan and Munuswamy (2016) suggested that teenagers coming from families with divorced parents make a significantly higher effort, compared to those from intact families, to engage in and maintain social interaction.

Gender Differences. According to previous studies, there might be significant differences in how female versus male teenagers react to divorce. For example, boys who live with their mothers might show higher resistance and hostility to divorce compared to girls, and girls might be more affected by parental divorce if

they live with their fathers, which culminates in a persistent attitude of hostility toward divorce (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). At the same time, girls might experience a sense of abandonment, a higher need for attention and love, more depressive symptoms, and over-controlling behaviors compared to boys (Amato & James, 2010; Tullius *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, they will experience more anxious reactions concerning the decision of possible future marriage and might blame themselves for their parents' divorce (Grumatchi, 2019). Also, in the absence of a male role model, boys might also experience more female sexual identification. Interestingly, boys from families with divorced parents seem to have a fluctuating attitude between hostility and protection toward their partner (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). However, these specific gender differences regarding emotional instability and self-esteem following parental divorce are still in need of further research.

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY FOLLOWING PARENTAL DIVORCE

A considerable amount of research describes adolescence as a difficult period marked by various mental and physical changes and multiple emotional challenges (Sawyer *et al.*, 2018). When a stressful factor occurs during this period, such as parental divorce, the various emotional manifestations of adolescents might be highly challenging (Petersen *et al.*, 2017). According to previous research (e.g., Pavlenko, 2019), parental divorce can significantly affect children's self-esteem, especially when no relevant explanations are given about the circumstances that favored the separation. Also, in some cases, the child may be assigned an unpleasant role, such as an object to be used against the other partner, affecting their self-esteem and self-image (Turliuc, 2011). In addition, Bivol (2016) argued that divorce could impact adolescents' physical and emotional health, similar to other research highlighting the negative impact on self-esteem (e.g., Meland *et al.*, 2020).

Emotional stability is critical in predicting people's reactions to stressful events and changes (Cerlat, 2019; Li & Ahlstrom, 2016). Previous research exploring the impact of parental divorce on adolescents' emotional stability suggested that this kind of stressful event has a negative impact, leading to emotional instability (e.g., Ibegwam, 2013). Nevertheless, emotional instability is also subject to other family-related variables, such as parenting styles and attachment patterns (e.g., Llorca-Mestre *et al.*, 2017), as well as parents' depressive symptoms, which seem to mediate the pathway between interparental conflict and adolescents' adjustment following divorce (Asanjarani *et al.*, 2022).

The research exploring the link between self-esteem and emotional stability among adolescents is not very generous. Most studies investigated the associations between emotional intelligence and self-esteem (e.g., Tajpreet *et al.*, 2015; Zeigler-Hill *et al.*, 2015) or the connection between self-esteem and aggressive behaviors,

mediated by emotion dysregulation (e.g., Garofalo *et al.*, 2015). Other studies investigated the link between adolescents' self-esteem and emotional maturity (Rajan & Joseph, 2019) or the associations between self-esteem instability, personality, and self-worth (Zeigler-Hill *et al.*, 2015). However, the specific link between self-esteem and emotional (in)stability, and the potential differences regarding adolescents from intact families versus those from divorced families, lacks sufficient evidence, shaping our study's novelty.

2. METHOD

2.1. AIMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The present study aimed to investigate the potential emotional impact of parental divorce on emotional stability, self-esteem, and attitudes toward divorce. Furthermore, we explored the specific link between self-esteem and emotional (in)stability, the potential differences between adolescents from intact families versus those from divorced families, and the possible related gender differences. Based on the previous literature, our assumptions were the following:

H1. Self-esteem would be negatively associated with emotional instability, regardless of parental status (married or divorced) (e.g., Erol & Orth, 2011); H2. Participants from divorced families would score lower than those from non-divorced families (i.e., married) regarding self-esteem and emotional stability (E.g., Ibegwam, 2013); H3. Female participants would score higher than males regarding emotional instability and self-esteem following parental divorce (Amato & James, 2010; Fagan & Churchill, 2012; Tullius *et al.*, 2022).

2.2. PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Our sample consisted of 136 participants aged 17 to 19 ($M = 17.86$, $SD = .80$), 66.2% females. All participants were students in their last two high-school years. Most of the participants were raised by both parents ($N = 85$, 62.5%) or one parent ($N = 36$, 26.5%), and only a small part reported being raised by grandparents ($N = 12$, 8.8%) or other relatives ($N = 3$, 2.2%). Among the 136 participants, 42 (30.9%) came from divorced families.

All participation was voluntary. Parental consent was obtained for participants under 18 (i.e., students in the 11th grade). Participants were first presented with an informed consent containing the purpose of the study (i.e., exploring emotions and general well-being). They were also informed that they could retire from the study at any point, there were no right and wrong answers, and all the information they would provide would remain anonymous and confidential. The examination took place at school on a regular course day. The time needed to answer all items was about 15 minutes. The research was conducted following the Helsinki Declaration

ethical criteria and the ethical research requirements approved by the institutional board of the authors' institution.

2.3. MEASURES

Attitude toward divorce. We used The Attitudes towards Divorce Scale, developed by Kinnard & Gerrard (1986). The scale consists of 12 items assessing the attitudes toward divorce on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Example items included "The fact that most individuals no longer feel that they have to stay in unhappy marital relationships will benefit society and If people are not happy in their marriage, they owe it to themselves to get a divorce and try to improve their lives". Following reliability analysis, we removed three items, and the final scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .62, with an inter-item correlation mean of .15. Higher scores indicated more positive attitudes toward divorce.

Emotional instability. Next, we measured participants' emotional instability using the 10-item Romanian version of the subscale from Goldberg *et al.* (2006) International Personality Item Pool (Ilieșcu *et al.*, 2015). The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example items included "I have frequent mood swings" and "I am filled with doubts about things". Following reliability analysis, we removed three items, and the final scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .81. Higher scores indicated higher emotional instability.

Self-esteem. We used a multidimensional approach to Self-Esteem, i.e., the Toulouse Self-esteem Scale (ETES), developed by Oubrayrie *et al.* (1994). ETES comprises 60 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The 60 items are distributed into five dimensions (each containing 12 items), i.e., The Emotional Self (control of emotions, impulsivity, and self-control: "I notice that I am usually angry and tense"), The Social Self (interactions with parents, peers; "Other people seem to listen and do what I say"), The Academic Self (skills, performance, and behaviors within educational settings: "I understand the lesson in class very quickly"), The Physical Self (body image: "I easily feel satisfied with my face and body"), and The Future Self (representations of the future: "I believe in my future"). Higher scores indicated higher self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was .87.

All participants filled out a demographic scale with details regarding their age, gender, the number of siblings, and their parents' marital status (i.e., married/divorced/separated / widow).

3. RESULTS

3.1. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

We first assessed the descriptive statistics of the primary variables. Then, we explored the associations among them following the analysis of the normality of the distributions, depending on participants' family status (married versus divorced parents) and self-reported gender. Next, we used Independent t-tests to investigate the potential differences in the attitudes toward divorce, overall self-esteem, and emotional instability depending on participants' family status, gender, and sibling relations (i.e., with or without siblings).

Table no. 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the main variables. Based on the skewness and kurtosis values, we further used parametric tests to analyze our data (George & Mallery, 2010).

Table no. 1
Descriptive statistics of the main variables

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall sample (N=136)						
Attitude tow. divorce	38.36	6.03	24	53	-.07	-.26
Emotional Instability	30.05	6.04	18	45	.14	-.49
Self-esteem (overall)	40.44	9.22	11	55	-1.02	.99
Married parents (N=94)						
Attitude tow. divorce	38.74	5.63	25	53	-.26	-.05
Emotional Instability	28.97	5.40	18	45	.26	.49
Self-esteem (overall)	42.24	7.63	22	55	-.63	-.12
Divorced parents (N=42)						
Attitude tow. divorce	37.52	6.85	24	52	.28	-.40
Emotional Instability	32.45	6.74	19	44	-.39	.71
Self-esteem (overall)	36.42	11.13	11	52	-.87	-.04

3.2. CORRELATION ANALYSES

Next, we explored the associations between the primary variables in the overall sample and the sample of participants with divorced and married parents. Results are presented in Table no. 2. In the overall sample, we found significant negative associations between the overall self-esteem and participants' emotional instability ($r = -.54$, $p < .001$). Similar findings were observed in the married group (i.e., participants whose parents were married), $r = -.47$, $p < .001$, and the divorced group (i.e., participants whose parents were divorced), $r = -.54$, $p < .001$.

Table no. 2.
Correlation analyses

Overall sample (N = 136)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Attitude tow. divorce	-						
2. Emotional Instability	-.13	-					
3. Self-esteem (overall)	-.03	-.54**	-				
4. Emotional Self	-.04	-.48**	.78**	-			
5. Social Self	-.03	-.37**	.78**	.52**	-		
6. Academic Self	.01	-.37**	.81**	.50**	.56**	-	
7. Physical Self	-.06	-.53**	.81**	.59**	.53**	.55**	-
8. Future Self	.00	-.32**	.64**	.43**	.46**	.44**	.38**
Married parents (N = 94)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Attitude tow. divorce	-						
2. Emotional Instability	-.10	-					
3. Self-esteem (overall)	.01	-.47**	-				
4. Emotional Self	-.01	-.44**	.70**	-			
5. Social Self	.02	-.28*	.69**	.36**	-		
6. Academic Self	.03	-.29*	.85**	.46**	.54**	-	
7. Physical Self	-.05	-.43**	.73**	.40**	.32*	.51**	-
8. Future Self	.09	-.24*	.55**	.30*	.28*	.38**	.21*
Divorced parents (N = 42)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Attitude tow. divorce	-						
2. Emotional Instability	-.12	-					
3. Self-esteem (overall)	-.16	-.54**	-				
4. Emotional Self	-.11	-.49**	.86**	-			
5. Social Self	-.16	-.39*	.86**	.65**	-		
6. Academic Self	-.08	-.38*	.74**	.49**	.53**	-	
7. Physical Self	-.13	-.58**	.89**	.80**	.73**	.51**	-
8. Future Self	-.20	-.34*	.74**	.57**	.67**	.44**	.58**

** $p < .001$; * $p < .05$.

3.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS (MARRIED VERSUS DIVORCED PARENTS)

The differences regarding the main variables based on parental status (married versus divorced) are presented in Table no. 3. Data suggested significant differences between participants whose parents were married or divorced regarding emotional instability, $t(134) = -3.20$, $p = .002$. More specifically, participants with divorced parents ($M = 32.45$) scored significantly higher than participants with married parents ($M = 28.97$). We also found significant differences concerning overall self-esteem, $t(134) = 3.07$, $p = .003$, with participants with divorced parents ($M = 36.42$) scoring significantly lower than those coming from non-divorced families ($M = 42.24$). Furthermore, our data suggested that the Social Self

dimension of self-esteem was significantly higher in participants with married parents ($M = 8.79$) than in those coming from divorced families ($M = 7.80$), and this pattern of differences was maintained regarding the Academic Self (M married families = 8.38, M divorced families = 6.69), the Physical Self, i.e., body image (M married families = 8.64, M divorced families = 7.11), and the Future Self (M married families = 8.18, M divorced families = 7.42).

Table no. 3
Differences regarding the main variables based on parental status (married versus divorced)

Overall sample	t	p	95% CI
Attitude tow. divorce	1.09	.27	-.99; 3.43
Emotional Instability	-3.20	.002*	-5.62; -1.32
Self-esteem (overall)	3.07	.003*	2.03; 9.59
Emotional Self	1.78	.08	-.10; 1.81
Social Self	2.11	.03*	.05; 1.92
Academic Self	3.23	.002*	.65; 2.72
Physical Self	3.05	.003	.54; 2.51
Future Self	2.60	.01	.18; 1.32

* $p < .05$.

3.4. GENDER DIFFERENCES

Next, we investigated the potential differences regarding the main variables based on gender, and the results are presented in Table 4. Data suggested significant differences between male and female participants regarding emotional instability, $t(134) = -3.68$, $p < .001$. More specifically, female participants ($M = 32.60$) scored significantly higher than male participants ($M = 28.74$). Furthermore, our data suggested that the Emotional Self dimension of self-esteem was significantly higher among male participants ($M = 8.28$) than among females ($M = 7.34$), and this pattern of differences was maintained regarding the Social Self (M males = 8.76, M females = 7.95).

Table no. 4
Differences regarding the main variables based on gender and parental status (married versus divorced)

Overall sample	t	p	95% CI
Attitude tow. divorce	-.93	.40	-3.18; 1.14
Emotional Instability	-3.68	.00**	-5.93; -1.79
Self-esteem (overall)	2.16	.06	-1.48; 7.28
Married parents ($N=94$)			
Attitude tow. divorce	-1.91	.059	-5.27; .09
Emotional Instability	-2.37	.02*	-5.60; -.50

Self-esteem (overall)	1.09	.27	-1.64; 5.72
Divorced parents (N=42)			
Attitude tow. divorce	.02	.98	-4.32; 4.43
Emotional Instability	-1.50	.13	-7.31; 1.06
Self-esteem (overall)	.47	.63	-5.40; 8.76

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

3.5. INTERACTION EFFECTS

Finally, we explored the interaction effect between parental status and gender on participants' emotional instability. However, Anova Univariate results suggested no significant interaction effect, $F(1, 135) = .001$, $p = .97$, $\eta^2 = .00$ (see Fig. no. 1).

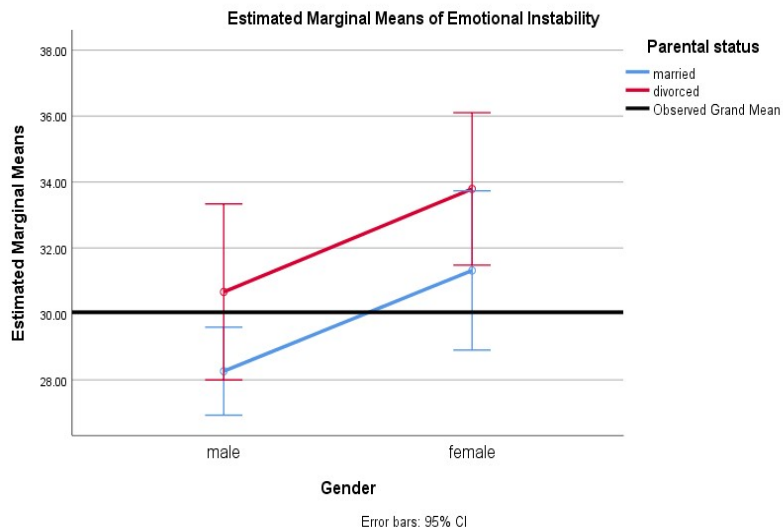


Fig. no. 1. Interaction effect between parental status and gender on participants' emotional instability

Similarly, we found no significant interaction effect regarding the overall self-esteem, $F(1, 135) = .01$, $p = .91$, $\eta^2 = .00$ (see Fig. no. 2).

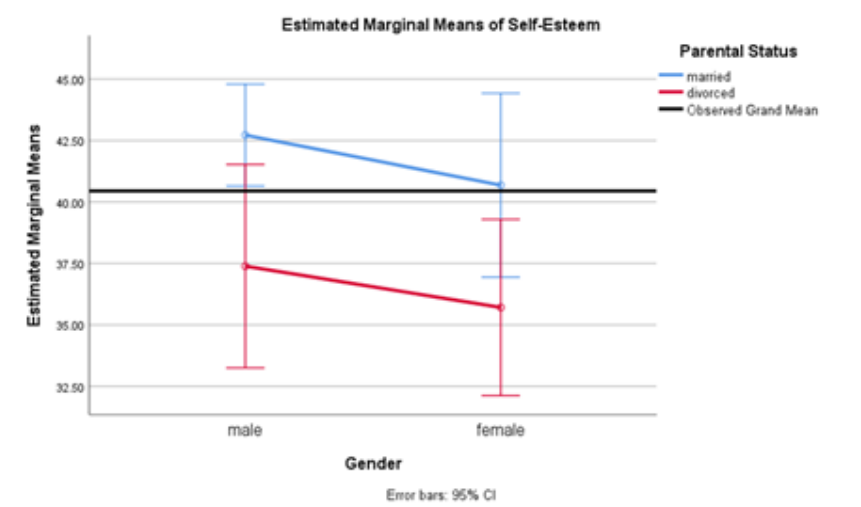


Fig. no. 2. Interaction effect between parental status and gender on participants' emotional self-esteem

4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In the present research, we investigated the potential emotional impact of parental divorce on late adolescents' emotional stability, self-esteem, and attitudes toward divorce. Based on previous findings, we assumed that self-esteem would be negatively associated with emotional instability, regardless of parental status (married or divorced) (e.g., Erol & Orth, 2011). Our results confirmed this assumption, suggesting that the higher the self-esteem, the higher the emotional stability, and the lower the self-esteem, the higher the emotional instability. This is one of the strong points of our study, given the scarce literature regarding this link, especially among adolescents from divorced families.

We also assumed that participants from divorced families would score lower than those from non-divorced families (i.e., married) regarding self-esteem and emotional stability (e.g., Ibegwam, 2013). Our results confirmed this assumption. However, it is also important to acknowledge that we measured self-esteem using a scale with five dimensions, and teenagers from non-divorced families scored higher than those from divorced families on each dimension. In other words, our data suggested that teenagers with divorced parents reported having lower emotional and social skills and weaker academic skills and performances. Moreover, they seemed to encounter difficulties visualizing their future selves and had a more negative body image. Our findings align with previous studies, such as

the one conducted by Rad (2012), which argued that descendants from families with divorced parents perform worse academically and have lower self-esteem than those with married parents. In addition, another research conducted by Dulamă *et al.* (2012) suggested that teens with divorced parents might have significantly weaker self-esteem outcomes, and this possibility increases when parental conflicts continue after divorce. One potential explanation for these results, i.e., lower self-esteem reported by participants with divorced parents, might be related to the modification of the family system with the onset of parental divorce (Amato & Anthony, 2014; Van Dijk *et al.*, 2020), as well as the possibility of depriving the children of explanations that would clarify the divorce reasons (Pavlenko, 2019; Turliuc, 2011).

Furthermore, following parental separation, in the absence of insufficient grounds for the emotional rupture (which caused the divorce), teenagers may experience guilt (which can affect both self-esteem and emotional stability). Therefore, they may feel responsible for the parental divorce and may experience states of confusion marked by diminishing emotional stability (Gharaibeh, 2015; Pavlenko, 2019). However, we did not investigate these possible links, but future studies might also benefit from adding these research aims. Finally, the fact that adolescents from divorced families reported less emotional stability than teenagers from intact families aligns with previous studies (e.g., Nazri *et al.*, 2019; Weaver & Schofield, 2015) might also be explained by the changes related to family climate and assumed new roles within the family (Mackay, 2005). Furthermore, we already know that adolescence is a challenging period, marked by many physical and emotional changes, and divorce can significantly add to the emotional load, generating potential emotional instability.

Finally, we assumed that female participants would score higher than males regarding emotional instability and self-esteem following parental divorce (Amato & James, 2010; Fagan & Churchill, 2012; Tullius *et al.*, 2022). Our results partially confirmed this assumption, suggesting that female participants would score higher than males regarding emotional instability, but we found this result only in the case of participants from married families. One potential explanation might be related to other possible factors affecting emotional stability during adolescence, regardless of one's family status (intact or divorced), such as the expectations of peers, family, and academic environment might generate stress and psychological tension, potentially causing emotional instability (Platon, 2017).

However, there are several limitations we need to consider when interpreting these results. First, the sample of participants is relatively small, lowering the generalizability of our findings. Future studies should consider exploring these findings in more extensive samples. Second, the two groups (i.e., participants from married versus divorced families) were not equilibrated. Future studies might also consider using more balanced groups. Third, all the scales we used were self-reported, increasing the desirability of participants' answers.

Despite these limitations, the present findings add to the literature regarding the potential emotional impact of parental divorce on late adolescents' mental health and self-image. Our results highlight the need for counseling following divorce and psychotherapy strategies generally aimed at increasing self-esteem and emotional stability, especially in potentially traumatic events like parental divorce.

Received: 25.04.2023

REFERENCES

1. AL GHARAIBEH, F. M., *The effects of divorce on children: Mothers' perspectives in UAE*, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, **56**, 5, 2015, p. 347–368, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2015.1046800>
2. AMATO, P. R., & JAMES, S., *Divorce in Europe and the United States: Commonalities and differences across nations*, Family Science, **1**, 1, 2010, p. 2–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19424620903381583>
3. ANDERSON J., *The Impact of Family Structure on the Health of Children: Effects of Divorce*. The Linacre Quarterly, **81**, 4, 2014, p. 378–387. <http://doi.org/10.1179/0024363914Z.000000000087>
4. ASANJARANI, F., GAO, M. M., DE SILVA, A., & CUMMINGS, E. M., *Exploring the link between interparental conflict and adolescents' adjustment in divorced and intact Iranian families*, Journal of Child and Family Studies, **31**, 6, 2022, p. 1596–1606. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-02163-3>
5. BIVOL, A., *Determinantele psihosociale ale comportamentului deviant la minori*. Analele științifice ale Academiei „Ștefan cel Mare” a MAI a Republicii Moldova, **8**, 2016. <http://dspace.academy.police.md/xmlui/handle/123456789/245>
6. BRANCH-HARRIS, C., & COX, A., *Efectele divorțului parental asupra atitudinilor adulților tineri față de divorț*, 2015. https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses/376/
7. CAVANAGH, S. E., CRISSEY, S. R., & RALEY, R. K., *Family structure history and adolescent romance*, Journal of Marriage and Family, **70**, 3, 2008, p. 698–714. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00515.x>
8. CARTWRIGHT, C., *You want to know how it affected me? Young adults' perceptions of the impact of parental divorce*, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, **44**, 3–4, 2006, p. 125–143. https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v44n03_08
9. CERLAT, R., *Particularități psihosociale ale stabilității emoționale a cadrelor didactice din învățământul primar*, 511.03, Psihologie Socială, 2019, p. 1–20.
10. DULAMĂ, M.E., VÂLCAN T.D., *Perspective asupra problematicilor din domeniul educației: cercetări și aplicații*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012.
11. EROL, R. Y., & ORTH, U., *Self-esteem development from age 14 to 30 years: a longitudinal study*, Journal Of Personality and Social Psychology, **101**, 3, 2011, p. 607. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024299>
12. FAGAN, P. F., & CHURCHILL, A., *The effects of divorce on children*. Marri Research, International Journal of Applied Research, **2**, 8, 2012, p. 572–575.
13. GAROFALO, C., HOLDEN, C. J., ZEIGLER-HILL, V., & VELOTTI, P., *Understanding the connection between self-esteem and aggression: The mediating*

- role of emotion dysregulation*, *Aggressive Behavior*, **42**, 1, 2016, p. 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21601>
14. GEORGE, D., & MALLERY, P., *SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference 17.0 Update*, 10th Edition, Pearson, Boston, 2010.
 15. GOLDBERG, L. R., JOHNSON, J. A., EBER, H. W., HOGAN, R., ASTHON, M. C., CLONINGER, C. R., & GOUGH, H. C., *The International Personality Item Pool and the future of public-domain personality measures*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, **40**, 2006, p. 84–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2005.08.007>
 16. GRUMAȚCHI, C., *Influența divorțului asupra afectivității la adolescenți: diferențe de gen*, *Interuniversitaria*, 2019, p. 232–236. <http://dspace.usarb.md:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/4812>.
 17. HASHEMI, L., & HOMAYUNI, H., *Emotional divorce: Child's well-being*, *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, **58**, 8, 2017, p. 631–644. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2016.1160483>.
 18. IBEGWAM, A., *The psycho-social effect of parental separation and divorce on adolescents: Implications for counselling in Surulere Local Government Area of Lagos State*, *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 2013, p. 161–162. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPC2013.0217>.
 19. ILIESCU, D., POPA, M., & DIMACHE, R., *Adaptarea românească a Setului International de Itemi de Personalitate: IPIP-Ro* [The Romanian adaptation of the International Personality Item Pool: IPIP-Ro], *Psihologia Resurselor Umane*, **13**, 1, 2015, p. 83–112, <https://www.hrp-journal.com/index.php/pru/article/view/148>.
 20. JEYASEELAN, M., & MUNUSWAMY, L., *Parental separation and anxiety among adolescent girls*, *International Journal of Applied Research*, **2**, 8, 2016, p. 572–575.
 21. JEYNES, W., *Divorce, family structure, and the academic success of children*, Routledge, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203048764>.
 22. LEBOW, J. L., *Treating the difficult divorce: A practical guide for psychotherapists*, American Psychological Association, 2019, p. 35–55. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000116-003>.
 23. LI, Y., & AHLSTROM, D., *Emotional stability: A new construct and its implications for individual behavior in organizations*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, **33**, 1, 2016, p. 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-015-9423-2>
 24. LLORCA-MESTRE, A., SAMPER, G.P., MOLONDA-VIDAL, E., CORTES-TOMAS, M.T., *Parenting style and peer attachment as predictors of emotional instability in children*, *Scientific Journal Publishers*, **45**, 4, 2017, p. 677–694. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.5363>
 25. MACKAY, R., *The impact of family structure and family change on child outcomes: A personal reading of the research literature*, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, **24**, 4, 2005, p. 111–133.
 26. MELAND, E., BREIDABLICK, H., & FRODE, T., *Divorce and conversational difficulties with parents: Impact on adolescent health and self-esteem*, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 2019, p. 743–745. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494819888044>

27. MILES, N. J., & SERVATY-SEIB, H. L., *Starea civilă a părinților și atitudinea puilor adulți tineri cu privire la căsătorie și divorț*, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, **51**, 4, 2010, p. 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502551003597865>
28. NAZRI, A. Q., RAMLI, A. U. H., MOKHTAR, N., JAFRI, N. A., & ABU BAKAR, N. S., *The effects of divorce on children*. e-Journal of Media and Society (e-JOMS), **3**, 2019, p. 1–19. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/29476/>
29. OUBRAYRIE, N., DE LEONARDIS, M., & SAFONT, C., *A tool for the evaluation of self-esteem in adolescents: the STE*, European Review of Applied Psychology, **44**, 4, 1994, p. 309–318.
30. PAVLENKO, L., *Consilierea psihologică în remedierea imaginii de sine scăzute la preadolescenții din familiile divorțate*, Învățământ superior: tradiții, valori, perspective, 2019, p. 148–152. https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare_articol/91030
31. PETERSEN, A. C., KENNEDY, R. E., & SULLIVAN, P., *Coping with adolescence*. In *Adolescent stress*, Routledge 2017, p. 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315083025>
32. PLATON, I. *Dimensiuni experimentale ale dezvoltării inteligenței sociale în perioada formării personalității în adolescența timpurie*, Psihologie, revista științifico-practică, **30**, 1–3, 2017, p. 13–25.
33. POTTER, D., *Psychosocial well-being and the relationship between divorce and children's academic achievement*, Journal of marriage and family, 2010, **72**, 4, p. 933–946. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00740.x>
34. RAJAN, C. S., & JOSEPH, H. B., *Self esteem and emotional maturity among adolescents*, International Journal of Nursing Care, **7**, 1, 2019, p. 27–29. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2320-8651.2019.00005.X>
35. RAD, S. *The Relationship between Marital Conflicts and the Emotional Divorce of Women Referred to the Eastern Courts of Tehran*, Quarterly Journal of Social Research, **6**, 20, 2012, p. 85–106.
36. ROMANIA INSIDER. *Press Release: The Rate of Divorce in Romania. The Results of The Year 2019*, 2020. <https://www.romania-insider.com/press-release-rate-divorce-romania-results-year-2019>.
37. SAWYER, S. M., AZZOPARDI, P. S., WICKREMARATHNE, D., & PATTON, G. C., *The age of adolescence*, The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, **2**, 3, 2018, p. 223–228. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(18\)30022-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(18)30022-1).
38. STORKSEN, I., ROYSAMB, E., HOMEN, T. L., & TAMBS, K., *Adolescent adjustment and well-being: effects of parental divorce and distress*, Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, **47**, 1, 2006, p. 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.2006.00494.x>
39. TAJPREET, K., & MAHESHWARI, S. K., *Relationship of emotional intelligence with self-esteem among adolescents*, Indian Journal of Psychiatric Nursing, **10**, 1, 2015, p. 18. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2231-1505.240278>
40. TULLIUS, J. M., DE KROON, M. L., A, J., & REIJNEVELD, S. A., *Adolescents' mental health problems increase after parental divorce, not before, and persist until adulthood: a longitudinal TRAILS study*, European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2021, p. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01715-0>.

41. TURLIUC, M. N., *Psychology and the Therapy of Separation and Divorce*, Anuarul Universității Petre Andrei din Iași, Fascicula: Asistența Socială, Sociologie, Psihologie, 2011.
42. VAN DIJK, R., VAN DER VALK, I. E., DEKOVIC, M., & BRANJE, S., *A meta-analysis on interparental conflict, parenting, and child adjustment in divorced families: Examining mediation using meta-analytic structural equation models*, Clinical Psychology Review, **79**, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101861>.
43. WEAVER, J. M., & SCHOFIELD, T. J., *Mediation and moderation of divorce effects on children's behavior problems*, Journal of Family Psychology, **29**, 1, 2015, p. 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000043>.
44. ZEIGLER-HILL, V., HOLDEN, C. J., ENJAIA, B., SOUTHARD, A. C., BESSER, A., LI, H., & ZHANG, Q., *Self-Esteem Instability and Personality: The Connections Between Feelings of Self-Worth and the Big Five Dimensions of Personality*, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, **41**, 2, 2015, p. 183–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214559719>.

REZUMAT

Studiul de față și-a propus să investigheze potențialul impact al divorțului parental asupra instabilității emoționale, stimei de sine și atitudinilor față de divorț în adolescența târzie. De asemenea, au fost explorate potențialele diferențe de gen în această privință. Eșantionul a fost format din 136 de participanți cu vârsta cuprinsă între 17 și 19 ani ($M = 17.86$, $SD = 0.80$), dintre care 66,2% au fost participanți de gen feminin. Toți participanții sunt elevi în ultimii doi ani de liceu, iar 30.9% provin din familii divorțate. Rezultatele au indicat asocieri negative semnificative între stima de sine generală și instabilitatea emoțională a participanților, indiferent de statutul parental (căsătorit sau divorțat). Cu toate acestea, datele au sugerat că participanții din familiile divorțate și femeile au raportat o stimă de sine mai scăzută și o instabilitate emoțională mai mare. Rezultatele sunt discutate în relație cu implicațiile lor pentru sănătatea mintală a tinerilor după divorțul părinților.