

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPATHY AND FORGIVENESS IN ADOLESCENT WHO HAVE A CHEATING PARENT

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents whose parents have an affair. This study uses quantitative research methods. The sampling technique used in this research is snowball sampling. The sample in this study consisted of 55 adolescents. The measurement of forgiveness data was carried out using a modified forgiveness scale from McCullough, Root, & Cohen (1999). Measurement of empathy was carried out using a modified empathy scale from Davis (1983). The data analysis technique used is Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis technique. Based on the results of the analysis, it is known that there is a very significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents whose parents have an affair with a significance value of 0.002 ($p < 0.01$). These results indicate that the hypothesis that there is a relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents is acceptable. Furthermore, the relationship has a positive direction, that is, the higher the level of empathy, the higher the level of forgiveness (forgiveness). Conversely, the lower the level of empathy, the lower the forgiveness.

Keywords: empathy; forgiveness; teenagers; cheating parents.

INTRODUCTION

Parents are figures that are imitated by teenagers, should parents have a good personality regarding attitudes, habits, behavior and ways of life. A complete family, according to ([Cho & Lee, 2017](#)) will publish the widest opportunity for individuals in it to receive the basics of development, practice good attitudes and habits. Family harmony will also provide a sense of security for teenagers to be able to develop naturally in accepting social experiences for living together in society.

Unfortunately at this time teenagers have many problems. One of the worrying problems experienced is when teenagers find out their parents are having an affair. Infidelity committed by parents is one of the phenomenal cases that is often raised by print and electronic media.

Parental infidelity can affect the socio-emotional aspects of adolescents as well as adolescent maturity in logical and rational thinking. When teenagers find out their parents are having an affair, they will experience feelings of deep sadness, anger, disappointment, or feeling neglected. In addition, infidelity can also have a direct impact on the relationship between parents and children. Parents become irritable or do not have time with their children. The greater the change in the condition of the parent-child relationship, the more it will affect the child's socio-emotional condition in a negative direction ([Houser, List, Piovesan, Samek, & Winter, 2016](#)).

The most damaging impact of infidelity is the psychological effect on children. In these situations, children tend to experience mental burdens. In children who

have not been able to express their emotions, children will show symptoms of anxiety. For example, being alone, bedwetting, thumb sucking, nightmares, and unstable emotions. This appears as a response to fear that his family's happiness will disappear ([Turner, Finkelhor, Hamby, & Henly, 2017](#)).

Meanwhile, children who are growing up (teenagers), will feel angry, betrayed, and more likely to express their frustration. Child and family psychologist, ([Heyman, Fu, Lin, Qian, & Lee, 2015](#)) explains that when children catch their parents' infidelity directly, the child will be confused. Another effect is a decrease in learning achievement, reduced self-confidence, depression, and being rude.

One of the things that can be used to reduce the bad impact for teenagers who know their parents are having an affair is that they can do forgiveness. Having an attitude of forgiveness or pardon in children, especially teenagers, is not easy, not all children are capable of forgiveness towards their parents.

Forgiveness is a process (or result of a process) that involves changing feelings and attitudes toward the offender. A number of studies view it as an intentional and deliberate process, driven by a decision to forgive. The result of this process is a decrease in the urge to maintain feelings of demands for the release of negative emotions to the perpetrator ([Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2016](#)).

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents whose

parents cheated on them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forgiveness

According to ([Amir, Ahl, Parsons, & McAuliffe](#), 2021), forgiveness is an effort to restore love and trust in relationships, so that individuals can end destructive rights. This is also reinforced by ([Breen, Kashdan, Lenser, & Fincham](#), 2010), that behavior forgiveness is an action as an attempt by a person not to retaliate against hurting others for what he has done, but to provide forgiveness. According to ([Hargrave & Zasowski](#), 2016) said forgiveness is healing from memory hurt, not erase. Forgiveness is also interpreted as a way to overcome relationships with the damaged one.

Dimensions of Forgiveness

The following are three dimensions of forgiveness according to McCullough, Root, and Cohen (2006), namely avoidance motivations, revenge motivations, and benevolence motivations.

Empathy

According to Taufik (2012) adds empathy is an activity to understand what he was thinking and feeling for others, and what she thought and felt by the person concerned (observer, perceiver) of the condition being experienced by others, without the corresponding loss of control himself. Empathy is considered an emotional state, often empathy has a cognitive component or the ability to see the psychological state in others, or what is called taking another person's perspective.

Adolescent

([Orben, Tomova, & Blakemore](#), 2020) said that adolescence is a period of transitional development between childhood and adulthood which includes biological, cognitive, and social changes. The age limit set by experts for adolescence varies. According to ([McDevitt, Ormrod, Cupit, Chandler, & Aloa](#), 2010), adolescence is the period between the ages of 12 to 23 years.

Infidelity

([Widita & Nurihsan](#), 2020), Big Indonesian Dictionary, cheating, etymologically defined as the act and behavior of people who like to hide something for their own sake, not being honest, dishonest, and cheating. According to ([Jones & Weiser](#), 2014), infidelity in terminology is a sexual or emotional activity carried out by one or both individuals bound in a committed relationship and considered to violate beliefs or norms (visible or invisible) related to emotional or sexual exclusivity.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the relationship between the variables mentioned above, in this study the authors formulate the following hypothesis, that there is a positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents. The higher the empathy, the higher the forgiveness and vice versa, the lower the empathy, the lower the forgiveness.

METHODS

Identification of Research

This study uses quantitative research methods. The variables used in this study are:

1. Criterion Variable (Y) : Forgiveness
2. Predictor Variable (X) :Empathy

Population And Research Sample

In this study, the population was teenagers who had cheating parents. This research uses snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is a snowball sample. This method is used when the researcher does not know much about the research population, only knows one or two people who based on their assessment can be used as samples ([Thamhain, 2014](#)). The sample in this study were teenagers who had a cheating parent as many as 55 people. The criteria for the sample are male and female adolescents aged 12 to 23 years ([Allen, Byrne, Oddy, & Crosby, 2013](#)).

Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the data collection technique used a questionnaire. Questionnaires or commonly called questionnaires are data collection techniques that are carried out by giving a set of questions or written statements to respondents for answers.

Validity, power and discrimination of items Reliability. According to ([LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014](#)) validity is the extent to which the accuracy and accuracy of a measuring instrument (test) in performing its measuring function. Whether or not a measuring instrument is valid depends on whether or not the measuring instrument is able to achieve the desired measurement

objectives correctly. In this study, content validity is a type of validity that is estimated through testing the test content with rational analysis. The question to be answered in this content validity is the extent to which the test items represent the components in the overall content area of the object to be measured (representational aspect) and the extent to which the test items reflect the behavioral characteristics to be measured (relevance aspect).

According to ([LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014](#)) the power of item discrimination is the extent to which items are able to distinguish between individuals or groups of individuals who have and do not have the attributes of a measuring instrument. As a criterion for selecting items based on the total item correlation, constraints are usually used.

The reliability of measuring instruments shows the extent to which the results of measurements with these measuring instruments can be trusted. According to ([LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014](#)), reliability actually refers to the consistency or trustworthiness of the measurement results which implies the accuracy of the measurement. Unreliable measurements will certainly not be consistent from time to time.

Data Analysis Techniques

The method used to analyze the data in this study is statistical analysis. The technique used in this research is the correlation analysis Product Moment from Karl Pearson, which is to analyze the relationship between empathy as the independent variable and forgiveness as

the dependent variable. Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 for Windows 10 program

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test Results

Content validity is the validity estimated through testing the feasibility of the test content through rational analysis by expert judgment, namely the researcher consults with the supervisor before distributing the questionnaire. In order to strengthen the results of item validity, the researchers conducted a try out after the test and were selected through expert judgment. Researchers used a trial using a used try out to determine the value of reliability. The test consists of 18 items on a scale forgiveness and 28 items on an empathy scale with five alternative answers.

Discrimination power-item

1) Scale Forgiveness

Study discrimination power test item on a scale of forgiveness using correlation Pearson Product Moment test, by correlating each item score with a score total items. The number of forgiveness items tested was 18 items, the results of a good item analysis had 0.30. The results of the analysis, it is known that all good items are 18 items and are in the correlation range between 0.425 to 0.730 which means that the item discrimination power is good.

Table 1. Distribution of Forgiveness Scale Items

No.	Dimension	Item Number		Number of Starting Items	Jumlah aitem baik
		Fav	Unfav		
1	Avoidance Motivations	10	2, 5, 7, 11, 15, 18	7	7
2	Revenge Motivation	1	4, 9, 13, 17	5	5
3	Benevolence motivations	3, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16		6	6
Total		8	10	18	18

Note: Items marked (*) are items that are lost.

2) Empathy Scale

In this research, the item discrimination power test on the empathy scale used the Pearson correlation Product Moment test, by correlating each item score with the total item score. The number of items forgiveness that were tested amounted to 28 items. The results of the analysis, a good item has 0.30. The results of the analysis, it is known that 17 items fall, while the good items are 11 items and are in the correlation range between 0.310 to 0.692 which means the discrimination power of the self-concept scale items is good.

Table 2. Distribution of Empathy Scale Items

No	Aspek	Number Item		Total Item Start	Total Item good
		Fav	Unfav		
1.	Fantasy	1,2,4	3*,6* *5,	7	3

No	Aspek	Number Item		Total Item Start	Total Item good
		Fav	Unfav		
		7*			
2.	Perspective Tacking	8*,1 0,11, 13,1 4	9*,12*	7	4
3.	Empathic Concern	15,1 7,18 *, 21	16*,19* ,20*	7	3
4.	Personal Distress	22*, 23*, 24*, 26*, 28	25*,27*	7	1
	Total	19	9	28	11

Note: the item marked (*) is the item that has failed.

Reliability Test

To determine the consistency of this measuring instrument, the researcher conducted a reliability test using Alpha Cronbach technique. The general agreement is that reliability is considered satisfactory if the coefficient value is 0.700.

1) Scale Forgiveness

Based on the results of the scale reliability test, forgiveness after processing the data, a reliability coefficient of 0.920 was obtained and was considered reliable in measuring the scale forgiveness in this study.

Table 3. Reliability of the Forgiveness Scale
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,920	18

2) Empathy Scale

The results of the reliability test on

the self-concept scale after processing the data, the reliability coefficient is 0.843 and is considered reliable in measuring the empathy scale in this study.

Table 4. Empathy Reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,843	11

Assumption Test

Before the results of the data analysis in this study were used as the basis for drawing hypotheses, an assumption test was carried out consisting of normality and linearity tests.

a. Normality

The normality test in this study used the Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Based on the results of the normality test, the scale forgiveness obtained a significant result of 0.13 ($p > 0.05$). This shows that the distribution of the variable scores forgiveness is not normally distributed.

The results of the normality test on the empathy scale obtained a significance result of 0.200 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that the distribution of empathy variable scores is normally distributed.

Tabel 5. Normality Test Results

Variabel	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p	Keterangan
Empati	0,200	($p < 0.05$)	Normal
Forgiveness	0,13	($p < 0.05$)	Tidak Normal

b. Linearity Test

Based on the linearity test on the

empathy and forgiveness scale, a significance value of 0.002 ($p < 0$) was obtained. ,05). It can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the variables of empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents.

Tabel 6. Linearity Test Results

Variabel	Sig.	Nilai p Hitung	Keterangan
Empati Forgiveness	0,002	< 0,05	Linear

Hypothesis Test

Analysis used in this study was Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis, and the data obtained a correlation coefficient value of 0.383** with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). These results indicate that there is a very significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents in this study.

Tabel 7. Hypothesis Test Results

		Correlation	
		Forgiveness	Empati
Forgiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	0,383 **
	Sig. (1-tailed)	55	55
Empati	Pearson Correlation	0,383**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	55	55

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Discussion

The results of this study show that there is a very significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents. With a correlation coefficient of 0.383 with a significance value of 0.002. The hypothesis testing of this research shows that the hypothesis is accepted. This means that the higher the empathy for adolescents who have cheating parents, the higher the forgiveness for what they have experienced. In building empathy, teens start by being open with their own emotions. In line with the opinion according to (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018) empathy is built based on self-awareness, the more open a person is to his own emotions, the more skilled he is in reading feelings. Every relationship that is at the root of caring stems from emotional adjustment, from the ability to empathize, that is, the ability to know how the other person is feeling and participate in the struggles of his life. Adolescents who have good empathy will influence adolescents to forgive someone for their wrong treatment.

The results of previous research from (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018) also found that there was a significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness. The higher a person's empathy, the higher the emergence of behavior forgiveness adolescent towards their parents. This is also supported by previous research conducted by (Ayun & Puspitawati, 2018) who found the results of this study showing that there is a very significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness, that empathy is positively and

significantly correlated with forgiving parents.

Stated that the age of adolescence greatly affects the process of forgiveness because at the age of adolescence the individual's emotional state is still not stable. ([Renz et al.](#), 2020) adds that the age factor has a significant influence on forgiveness that affects cognition and behavior. Adolescents have reasoning about forgiveness different from children and adults and thus forgiveness is conceptualized as a cognitive development process. This is in line with the results of the calculation of mean empirical categorization forgiveness 12-15 based on age, youth aged years of 73 are in the high category, adolescents aged 16-19 years of 79.6 are in the high category and adolescents of 20-23 years of 76, 80 are in the high category. Meanwhile, the mean of empirical empathy categorization based on age, adolescents aged 12-15 years of 73.5 are in the very high category, adolescents aged 16-19 years of 68.4 are in the very high category and adolescents of 20-23 years of 71.34 is in the very high category.

Stated that women express higher levels of empathy than men, this is due to either genetic differences or differences in socialization experiences. Women are more likely to be aware of their emotions than men, share more appreciation and want to maintain interpersonal relationships with others. Next, this study shows that forgiveness women's is higher than that of men. This study shows the same results as the research conducted. Based on the results of this study, men and women have significant differences in forgiveness. Women have forgiveness higher than men.

This is because according to ([Wachsmuth, Jowett, & Harwood](#), 2018) that men often enjoy interpersonal conflict and competition, whereas in women conflict is more likely to trigger a series of negative hormones that cause stress and anxiety and fear. This is also in line with research conducted by ([Marigoudar & Kamble](#), 2014) that forgiveness is higher for women than men and empathy for women is higher than empathy for men.

This is in line with the results of the calculation of mean empirical categorization forgiveness based on gender, adolescents who have parents who cheat on men are in the high category with a value of 77.05 and female adolescents are in the high category with a value of 105.5. Meanwhile, the mean of empirical categorization of empathy for adolescents who have parents cheating on them is in the very high category with a value of 69.5 and female adolescents are in the very high category with a value of 98.2.

([Schuller & Watson](#), 2015) suggested the influence of education on forgiveness. One of the important reasons is that individuals with higher education have greater opportunities to learn to live together than individuals with lower education. Education trains individuals to live together, including how to resolve conflicts that take place around them. One of the most important conflict resolutions is forgiveness. Adolescents tend to see themselves and others as what individuals want them to be, and not as individuals are. This is in line with the results of the calculation of mean empirical categorization forgiveness based on education, adolescents who have cheating

parents with a junior high school education background are in the medium category with a score of 55, while adolescents with a high school education background are in the very high category with a score of 83.09 , adolescents with MA educational background are in the high category with a score of 69.75, adolescents with educational background Students are in the high category with a score of 77.02, adolescents with other educational backgrounds are in the high category with a value of 74.3.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research that has been carried out to examine the relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents, it is known that the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. So it can be concluded that there is a very significant positive relationship between empathy and forgiveness in adolescents who have cheating parents, where the correlation coefficient value is 0.383 with a significance value of 0.002. Furthermore, the relationship has a positive direction, that is, the higher the level of empathy, the higher the level of forgiveness (forgiveness). Conversely, the lower the level of empathy, the lower the forgiveness. Based on the results of the description of the research variables, it is known that the empirical mean value of forgiveness is 77.03 which means it is in the high category and the empirical mean of empathy is 20.81 which means it is in the very high category. This shows that

respondents are able to do forgiveness because they have a good level of empathy.

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