

The Mediating Role of Resilience in the Relationship Between Social Support and Self-Esteem among Fatherless Adolescents

Peran Mediasi Resiliensi dalam Hubungan antara Dukungan Sosial dan Harga Diri pada Remaja yang Kehilangan Ayah

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ABSTRACT

Emotional pressures experienced by fatherless adolescents such as low self-confidence and loneliness highlight the importance of environmental support in helping them continue to develop positively. In this context, social support serves as a key factor that strengthens an individual's ability to cope and enhances their self-perception. This study aims to examine the influence of social support on self-esteem, with resilience as a mediating variable among fatherless adolescents in Semarang City. The subjects were adolescents aged 15–17 years who were experiencing fatherless conditions, selected using purposive sampling. This research employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, collecting data through psychological scales and analyzing it using path analysis. The results showed that social support has a positive and significant effect on both resilience and self-esteem ($p < 0.05$), and resilience was found to mediate the relationship between social support and self-esteem. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination indicated that social support and resilience together contribute approximately 31% to self-esteem. In other words, the higher the social support received, the stronger the resilience developed, which in turn leads to improved self-esteem among fatherless adolescents.

ABSTRACT

Tekanan emosional seperti rasa tidak aman dan kesepian yang dialami oleh remaja tanpa kehadiran ayah menunjukkan betapa pentingnya peran lingkungan dalam mendorong perkembangan positif mereka. Dalam hal ini, dukungan sosial menjadi salah satu faktor penting yang dapat memperkuat resiliensi sekaligus membentuk penilaian diri yang lebih positif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh dukungan sosial terhadap harga diri dengan resiliensi sebagai variabel mediator pada remaja tanpa kehadiran ayah di Kota Semarang. Penelitian melibatkan remaja berusia 15–17 tahun yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan desain cross-sectional, data dikumpulkan melalui skala psikologis dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis jalur (path analysis). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dukungan sosial berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap resiliensi dan harga diri ($p < 0,05$), serta resiliensi terbukti memediasi hubungan antara keduanya. Nilai koefisien determinasi menunjukkan bahwa dukungan sosial dan resiliensi memberikan kontribusi terhadap harga diri sebesar ±31%. Dengan kata lain, semakin tinggi dukungan sosial yang diterima, semakin kuat resiliensi yang terbentuk, yang pada akhirnya berdampak pada peningkatan harga diri pada remaja tanpa kehadiran ayah.

Kata Kunci:

Dukungan Sosial, Harga Diri, Remaja Tanpa Sosok Ayah, Resiliensi

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INTROUCTIONS

Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage characterised by rapid biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that shape an individual's transition from childhood to adulthood (Wu et al., 2022). During this period, adolescents are expected to accomplish several developmental tasks, including establishing a coherent personal identity, achieving emotional independence from parents, developing mature interpersonal relationships, and constructing a stable sense of self-worth (Wright, 2016). Successful completion of these developmental tasks depends not only on individual characteristics but also on the quality of the family environment in which adolescents are raised. Within the family system, mothers and fathers contribute distinct yet complementary roles that cannot be fully substituted for one another (Wilkinson & Walford, 2016). While mothers are commonly recognised for providing emotional care and daily nurturing, fathers play a unique role in fostering autonomy, behavioural regulation, social competence, emotional security, and identity development (Yuan et al., 2023). A growing body of evidence further suggests that paternal involvement contributes significantly to adolescents' psychological adjustment, academic achievement, emotional regulation, and overall well-being (Wardoyo et al., 2021). Consequently, limited paternal involvement may disrupt developmental processes during adolescence, making fatherlessness an increasingly important issue in developmental psychology and adolescent mental health research (Wadin & Subardjo, 2026).

The growing prevalence of fatherlessness has transformed this issue from an individual family concern into a broader social and public health challenge. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Population and Family Development (Kemendukbangga/BKKBN, 2025), 25.8% of Indonesian children currently experience fatherlessness, while 24.4% of children in Central Java are categorised within the same condition (Tarsono, 2018). Unlike previous reports that primarily focused on the father's physical absence, the revised national indicator incorporates broader dimensions of father involvement, including emotional availability, communication, responsibility, and active participation in children's daily lives (Sutanto & Suwartono, 2019). This conceptual shift reflects the understanding that fatherlessness extends beyond residential arrangements and encompasses the quality of paternal engagement throughout child development. These national statistics indicate that a substantial proportion of Indonesian adolescents are growing up with limited paternal involvement during one of the most psychologically sensitive stages of development (Sowislo & Orth, 2016). Given the increasing prevalence of fatherlessness, identifying psychological resources that enable adolescents to adapt successfully despite paternal absence has become an urgent priority for both researchers and practitioners (Sovianita et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is also evident in Semarang, where preliminary qualitative exploration conducted by the researchers revealed diverse patterns of psychological adjustment among fatherless adolescents (J., Firnando & Suhesty, 2024). Preliminary interviews with three fatherless adolescents indicated that although participants experienced similar emotional challenges following the absence of their fathers, including sadness, loneliness, anxiety, feelings of incompleteness, and diminished self-confidence, their long-term adaptation differed considerably (Handayani et al., 2024). Adolescents who perceived consistent emotional support from their mothers, extended family members, teachers, and peers described greater confidence in overcoming difficulties, stronger emotional stability, and a more positive evaluation of themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Conversely, participants who reported limited emotional support tended to experience persistent self-blame, social withdrawal, and difficulties developing positive self-worth (Ratnasari, 2024). Interestingly, participants who successfully adapted to fatherlessness consistently described a gradual process in which supportive relationships strengthened their ability to cope with adversity before eventually improving their self-esteem (Rambe & Alfita, 2025). These observations are consistent with previous studies suggesting that social support facilitates positive psychological adaptation by strengthening resilience, which subsequently promotes healthier self-evaluations among adolescents experiencing adverse life events (Qi et al., 2024). Therefore, rather than influencing self-esteem directly, social support may first cultivate adolescents' adaptive capacities, enabling them to reinterpret adverse experiences more positively and maintain psychological well-being despite the absence of a father (Puspitaningrum & Pudjiati, 2023). This preliminary evidence provides an important contextual foundation for examining resilience as a mediating mechanism linking social support and self-esteem among fatherless adolescents (Prabhu & Shekhar, 2016).

Fatherlessness has consistently been associated with a wide range of adverse developmental outcomes, particularly during adolescence when individuals are establishing their identity and evaluating their self-worth (Poudel et al., 2020). Fatherless adolescents are generally defined as those who grow up without adequate paternal involvement because of divorce, parental separation, death, migration, or the father's emotional disengagement from parenting (Pinquart, 2016). Contemporary literature argues that fatherlessness should not merely be interpreted as the father's physical absence but also as the absence of meaningful emotional interaction, guidance, and psychological support (Park & E.-Y., 2025). The lack of these paternal functions may undermine adolescents' emotional security, increase their vulnerability to psychological distress, and reduce opportunities to develop adaptive coping strategies (Park, 2016). Empirical studies conducted in Indonesia further demonstrate that fatherless adolescents are more likely to experience anxiety, loneliness, interpersonal difficulties, and lower psychological well-being

than adolescents raised in intact families (Nuraqmarina et al., 2025). These findings indicate that fatherlessness constitutes a developmental risk factor that may hinder healthy psychosocial adjustment, particularly when protective resources within the family and social environment are limited (Mufidha, 2021).

Among the various psychological consequences associated with fatherlessness, self-esteem has emerged as one of the most important indicators of adolescent adjustment (Mesman et al., 2021). Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of personal worth, competence, and value, reflecting the extent to which individuals perceive themselves positively or negatively (Masten, 2018). During adolescence, self-esteem functions as a fundamental psychological resource because it influences emotional well-being, academic motivation, interpersonal relationships, and resilience against psychological disorders (Martínez-Casanova et al., 2024). Adolescents with healthy self-esteem tend to exhibit greater confidence, stronger social competence, and better emotional regulation, whereas those with low self-esteem are more susceptible to depression, anxiety, behavioural problems, and social withdrawal (Markowitz & Ryan, 2016). Previous studies consistently report that adolescents experiencing fatherlessness generally display lower levels of self-esteem than their peers raised with active paternal involvement (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). Similarly, Luthar et al. (2017) emphasised that positive self-evaluation develops through continuous experiences of acceptance, appreciation, and successful adaptation within one's social environment. These findings suggest that understanding factors capable of maintaining or enhancing self-esteem among fatherless adolescents is essential for promoting healthier developmental outcomes (Liu et al., 2021).

One protective factor frequently identified in developmental psychology is social support, which encompasses emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal assistance received from significant others (R. Lestari & Fajar, 2024). Although fathers traditionally represent one of the primary sources of support during adolescence, fatherless adolescents often rely on alternative support systems, including mothers, siblings, extended family members, teachers, peers, and community mentors. Such relationships may compensate, at least partially, for the psychological functions typically fulfilled by fathers (A. P. Lestari & Wijayanti, 2019). Previous research has consistently demonstrated that adolescents who perceive stronger social support tend to report better psychological adjustment, greater life satisfaction, lower emotional distress, and higher self-esteem (Kong et al., 2016). Within the Indonesian context, Culture (2022) found that emotional support and adaptive coping played important roles in fostering positive self-perceptions among fatherless adolescents despite the absence of paternal involvement. Nevertheless, empirical findings remain inconsistent. Keizer et al. (2019), for example, reported that although social support was positively associated with self-esteem, its direct effect was statistically

insignificant after controlling for other psychological variables. These contradictory findings indicate that social support alone may not sufficiently explain variations in self-esteem among fatherless adolescents and suggest the existence of additional psychological mechanisms through which supportive relationships influence positive self-evaluation (James et al., 2021).

Resilience has increasingly been recognised as one of the most influential protective factors that enables adolescents to maintain positive psychological functioning despite experiencing significant adversity (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). Within developmental psychology, resilience is defined as the dynamic capacity to adapt successfully, recover from stressful experiences, and continue functioning effectively despite exposure to substantial risks (Iga & Kristinawati, 2022). Rather than representing an innate personality trait, resilience develops through continuous interactions between individual characteristics and environmental resources (Hikmah & Selian, 2026). For fatherless adolescents, resilience is particularly important because the absence of a father often exposes them to prolonged emotional stress, identity-related conflicts, and reduced family stability. Adolescents with higher resilience are generally better able to regulate negative emotions, reinterpret adverse experiences positively, utilise available social resources, and maintain hope regarding their future despite difficult family circumstances. Conversely, inadequate resilience may increase vulnerability to emotional distress, maladaptive coping behaviors, and persistent negative self-perceptions (Hiebel & al., 2021). Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (2018) reported that fatherlessness not only affects adolescents' emotional adjustment but also contributes to social withdrawal, anger, and academic difficulties, all of which may undermine healthy psychological development. In contrast, Hanımoğlu and Yıldırım (2025) demonstrated that resilient fatherless adolescents tend to transform adverse experiences into opportunities for personal growth by developing stronger coping strategies, emotional maturity, and psychological independence. These findings suggest that resilience may serve as an essential internal resource that determines whether fatherlessness results in psychological vulnerability or adaptive development (Golombok et al., 2020).

The relationship between social support and resilience has been extensively examined within developmental and positive psychology, with most studies identifying social support as one of the strongest external predictors of resilient functioning. According to resilience theory, protective interpersonal relationships provide emotional security, practical assistance, and positive reinforcement that strengthen adolescents' ability to cope with stressful life events (Grotberg, 2003). Social support from parents, peers, teachers, and significant others contributes to adolescents' confidence in managing difficulties while simultaneously promoting adaptive coping, emotional regulation, and psychological flexibility. Longitudinal evidence further indicates that adolescents who

perceive higher levels of social support are more likely to demonstrate greater resilience when confronted with chronic stress or adverse childhood experiences (Fritz et al., 2018). Nevertheless, empirical evidence remains inconclusive. Gross (2016) found no significant association between social support and resilience among adolescents, suggesting that the effectiveness of social support may depend on contextual factors, the quality and source of support, and individual psychological characteristics such as emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and cognitive appraisal (Ferreira et al., 2021). These inconsistent findings imply that the relationship between social support and resilience cannot be assumed to be universal and warrants further investigation, particularly among fatherless adolescents who experience unique developmental challenges (Farooq & Majeed, n.d.).

Similarly, although resilience has consistently been associated with higher self-esteem, previous findings remain mixed regarding the strength and consistency of this relationship. Theoretically, resilience enables adolescents to perceive stressful experiences as manageable rather than overwhelming, thereby fostering confidence in their own abilities and strengthening positive self-evaluation. Du et al. (2017) demonstrated that resilience directly enhances adolescents' self-esteem while simultaneously encouraging the use of adaptive coping strategies that reinforce feelings of competence and personal value. Adolescents who successfully overcome adversity are more likely to develop positive beliefs regarding their capacity to face future challenges, ultimately contributing to healthier self-esteem. However, other studies suggest that resilience alone may not sufficiently explain variations in self-esteem. Desinta et al. (2025), for example, reported that resilience did not significantly predict self-esteem after accounting for broader psychosocial factors, indicating that positive self-evaluation may also depend on supportive relationships, family functioning, and social acceptance. Collectively, these contradictory findings suggest that resilience may operate not only as an independent predictor of self-esteem but also as an intermediary psychological mechanism through which external protective factors, particularly social support, influence adolescents' perceptions of self-worth. Despite this theoretical possibility, empirical studies examining such a mediating process remain limited, especially within the context of fatherless adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODS

Three main variables were studied in this study, namely resilience, self-esteem, and social support. Social support plays a role as an independent variable, self-esteem as a dependent variable, while resilience is placed as a mediator variable that helps explain the influence of social support on self-esteem. The study participants were adolescents aged 15–17 years in Semarang City who lived without a father. Using the *purposive sampling* technique, a minimum of 384 respondents were determined based on

criteria: not living with their father due to divorce or death, and willing to participate in the study.

Data collection applied a survey method with an instrument in the form of a psychological scale. The self-esteem scale is constructed based on Rosenberg's (1965) theory which emphasizes self-acceptance and self-esteem. The social support scale is compiled based on the theory of Zimet et al. (1988) which includes family support, peer support, and support from *significant others*. The resilience scale was developed from the theory of Connor and Davidson (2003) which includes personal competence, high standards and perseverance, trust in intuition and tolerance for negative emotions, positive acceptance of change and stable relationships, self-control, and spiritual influence. All measuring instruments have been declared valid and reliable through a strict evaluation process.

This study uses a quantitative approach with the help of statistical software JASP and SmartPLS 4.0. The main objective was to explore the relationship between variables while testing the mediating effect of resilience on the link between social support and self-esteem in fatherless adolescents. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to describe the status of the research data, including the calculation of the average value, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value of each variable. These descriptive results provide an overview of the levels of social support, resilience, and self-esteem among respondents.

The items shown in the table represent the loading *factor values* that have passed the minimum threshold (≥ 0.5). According to the item selection process, for the self-esteem and social support variables, which initially had 12 items each, only 6 items were considered valid and used in the analysis, while the other 6 items were discarded because they did not meet the *loading factor* criteria. Regarding the resilience variable, out of the initial pool of 20 items, 10 items were considered valid while the remaining 10 items did not meet the criteria and were then discarded. Thus, the elements used in this study come from a strict selection process, ensuring that the research tool has a high measurement quality both in terms of validity and reliability. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests shown in the figure, the self-esteem variable showed a *loading factor* value between 0.591 and 0.801, suggesting that each item effectively represented the construct being measured. The reliability metric is considered strong, with *McDonald's ω* at 0.881, *Cronbach's α* at 0.882, and AVE at 0.559. This shows that the self-esteem variable has excellent internal consistency and meets the standard for convergent validity. Regarding the social support variable, the *loading factor* value ranged from 0.623 to 0.929, indicating that the items used met the validity standard. Regarding reliability, *McDonald's ω* value was measured at 0.756, *Cronbach's α* at 0.818, and AVE at 0.504. Therefore, the social support variable is considered reliable and shows sufficient convergent validity, although its consistency is categorized from moderate to good.

The resilience variable has a *loading factor* value between 0.511 and 0.729, remaining above the minimum threshold so that it meets the validity requirements. The reliability values achieved are also relatively high, especially McDonald's ω of 0.900, Cronbach's α of 0.905, and AVE of 0.592. This shows that the resistance variable exhibits excellent internal consistency and can optimally explain the variance of the construct. Thus, in conclusion, this research tool can be considered feasible for use in additional examinations."

After that, an inferential analysis is carried out to test the hypothesis that has been established. The method used is *path analysis* with the help of JASP, which was chosen because of its ability to analyze direct and indirect relationships simultaneously in a single model. Model testing takes place in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (*outer model*) and evaluation of the structural model (*inner model*). The measurement model is assessed through *factor loading*, *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*, and composite reliability to test the validity and reliability of the indicators. The structural model is assessed by analyzing the path coefficients, t-statistical values, and p-values resulting from the *bootstrapping procedure*.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Demographics

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	193	46.7
	Female	220	53.3
Age	17 years	249	60.3
	Other ages	164	39.7
Educational Status	Junior High School (Junior High School/Equivalent)	374	90.6
	Other educational levels	39	9.4
Fatherless Status	Felt abandoned by father without communication	198	47.9
	Other fatherless conditions	215	52.1
Duration of Fatherless Experience	< 1 year	89	21.5
	1–5 years	128	31.0
	5–10 years	79	19.1
	> 10 years	79	19.1
	Since birth	38	9.2
Current Living Arrangement	Living with biological mother	248	60.0
	Living alone/Renting a room	73	17.7

As for this study, the number of respondents obtained was 413, dominated by female respondents, as many as 220 people (53.3%); The age of most consumers is 17 years, which is 249 people (60.3%); with educational status dominated by students at the junior high school/equivalent level, which is 374 people (90.6%).

Based on data based on *fatherless status*, the majority of respondents felt abandoned by their fathers without communication, totaling 198 people (47.9%). According to the Duration of experiencing a *fatherless* condition, participants had differences in the amount of time spent in a fatherless situation. Most of the respondents were in the less than 1 year category, consisting of 89 people (21.5%), while the 5–10 year and over 10 years groups represented 19.1% each. At the same time, those who faced a *situation of fatherlessness* from birth reached 9.2%, the lowest rate. This shows that the majority of participants face a *fatherless* situation in a relatively short to moderate period of time. According to Current Residence, the majority of respondents live with their biological mother as much as 60%, while those who live alone or rent a room reach 17.7%. This shows that mothers play a central role in the lives of *fatherless* adolescents, acting as caregivers and emotional supporters.

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Categorization of Variables

The grouping criteria in this study are classified into three categories: high, medium, and low. This categorization depends on the average and standard deviation of the information (Azwar, 2019). The score arrangement for each variable in this study is described according to the empirical and theoretical averages of the variables in the figure below.

Table 2. Categorization of Variables

Variable	Empirical Min	Empirical Max	Mean	SD	Category
Self-Esteem	6	24	14.47	4.67	Moderate
Social Support	6	24	15.30	4.08	Moderate
Resilience	10	40	25.61	6.99	Moderate

All of the research variables, particularly self-esteem, social support, and resilience, were in the moderate range. This can be seen from the empirical mean value that is close to the theoretical average for each variable. The observed average on self-esteem (14.47) is close to the expected average (15), social support (15.30) is also close (15), and resilience (25.61) is close (25). Therefore, the condition of participants generally showed moderate levels in all three variables, neither low nor high.

CFA Fit Index

From the CFA *Fit Index* image, it can be concluded that all variables in this study, especially self-esteem, social support, and resilience, meet the criteria for model adequacy (*good fit*). This is indicated by the value of indices including CFI, TLI, NFI, GFI, IFI, and RFI, all of which exceed the threshold value of ≥ 0.90 . In addition, the RMSEA and SRMR scores for all three variables were below the maximum limit ≤ 0.08 , indicating a minimal error rate in the model. The PNFI value exceeds 0.50, indicating a satisfactory (suitable) level of model simplicity. As a result, the measurement model in this study was considered effective and suitable for further analysis. Here is a picture of the model plots of each scale:

Table 3. CFA Fit Index

Model Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Self-Efficacy	Social Support	Resilience	Interpretation
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.965	0.979	0.920	Good Fit
TLI (Tucker–Lewis Index)	≥ 0.90	0.942	0.936	0.998	Good Fit
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.958	0.973	0.906	Good Fit
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.990	0.997	0.976	Good Fit
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.965	0.979	0.921	Good Fit
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.930	0.920	0.979	Good Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.056	0.033	0.058	Good Fit
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.032	0.030	0.052	Good Fit
PNFI	≥ 0.50	0.575	0.524	0.705	Acceptable Fit

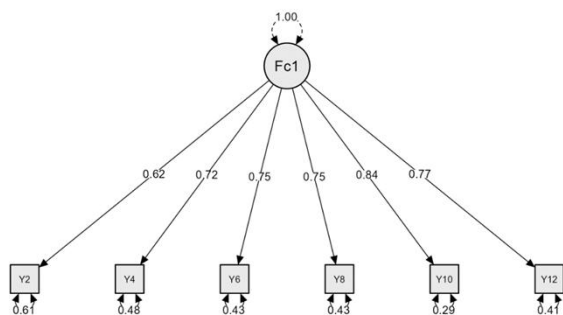


Image 1. Self-Esteem Scale Plot Model

According to the Self-Esteem Scale Plot Model Drawing, the latent variable of self-esteem (Fc1) is indicated by six indicators: Y2, Y4, Y6, Y8, Y10, and Y12. All of these indicators show a factor charge value exceeding 0.50, ranging from 0.62 to 0.84, indicating that each item effectively measures the self-esteem construct. The indicator that shows the highest contribution value is Y10 (0.84), while the lowest is Y2 (0.62), which still meets the eligibility requirements. In addition, the error value for each indicator is quite low, indicating that the model fits well. Thus, the self-esteem assessment model can be described as one-dimensional and appropriate for further analysis.

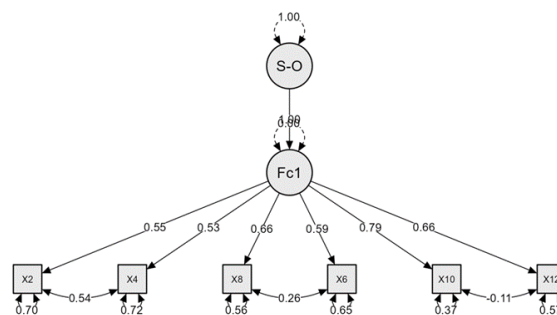


Image2. Social Support Scale Plot Model

The Social Support Scale Plot Model image shows that the latent variables of social support are assessed through a major factor (Fc1) consisting of six indicators: X2, X4, X6, X8, X10, and X12, which are reinforced by a second-order structure (S-O) that improves the construct. The value of *factor loading* varied between 0.53 and 0.79, indicating that all indicators made a significant contribution (≥ 0.50) in reflecting social support variables. The indicator with the largest value is X10 (0.79), while the smallest is X4 (0.53), but it still meets the validity requirements. In addition, the error value for each indicator is quite small, indicating that the model for measuring social support can be considered valid, reliable, and practical for further analysis.

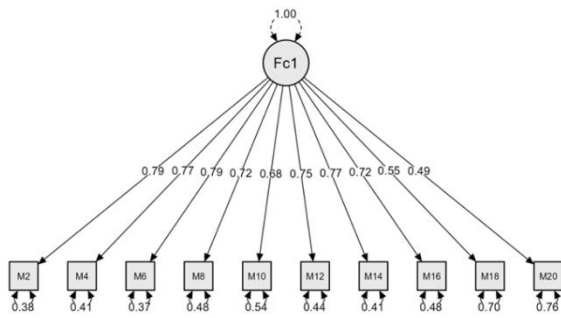


Image 3. Resilience Scale Plot Model

According to the Resilience Scale Plot Model Drawing, the latent resilience variable (Fc1) is assessed through 10 indicators, specifically M2 to M20. The factor charge values for each indicator are usually above 0.50, ranging from 0.49 to 0.79, suggesting that they can effectively represent a resilience construct. The indicators that contribute the highest are M2 and M8 (0.79), while the M20 contribution is the lowest (0.49), staying at the minimum acceptable threshold. In addition, the error value for each indicator is quite small, indicating a minimal model error rate. As a result, the resilience assessment framework can be considered *unidirectional*, valid, and practical for further examination.

Assumption Test Results

Normality Test

The results of the normality test conducted through the *Shapiro-Wilk* method showed a significance value of 0.831. Since this value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it can be determined that the research data follow a normal distribution. Once the assumption of normality is met, the data is deemed worthy of further analysis.

Multicollinearity Test

Based on the findings of the multicollinearity assessment, it was found that the Tolerance value was 0.431 (which exceeded 0.10) and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was 2.318 (which was less than 10) for each independent variable. These findings suggest that the regression model shows no signs of multicollinearity. Therefore, it can be determined that the independent variables do not have a high correlation, which means that the assumption of multicollinearity in the regression model is met.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The scatterplot graph depicted in the image shows that the residual points are randomly scattered above and below the zero line, with no obvious patterns such as funnel or wavy shapes. This shows that the regression model does not show heteroscedasticity. Thus, the conditions of homocedasticity have been met, making this model suitable for further analysis.

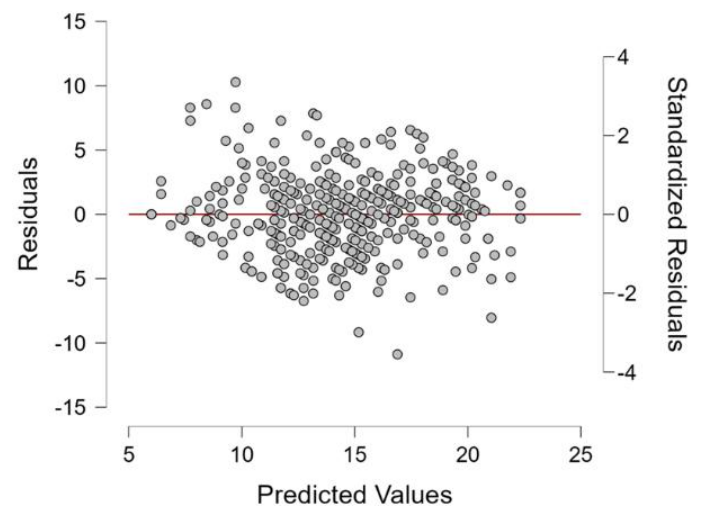


Image 4. Heteroscedasticity Test

Hypothesis Test Results

Table 4. Direct Effects

Variable Relationships	Coefficients	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	Lower	Upper	Remarks
Social Support (X) → Resilience (M)	0.185	0.008	23.335	< 0.001	0.169	0.200	H1 accepted
Resilience (M) → Self-Esteem (Y)	0.430	0.049	8.745	< 0.001	0.334	0.527	H2 accepted
Social Support (X) → Self-Esteem (Y)	0.092	0.012	7.609	< 0.001	0.068	0.115	H3 accepted

As presented in the Direct Effects analysis, social support exerted a significant positive direct effect on resilience ($\beta = 0.185$, $p < .001$), indicating that adolescents who perceived higher levels of social support tended to demonstrate greater resilience. Although the magnitude of this relationship was relatively modest, the statistically significant coefficient suggests that support received from

family, peers, and other significant individuals plays an important role in strengthening adolescents' capacity to adapt to adversity associated with fatherlessness. This finding supports the assumption that social resources serve as protective factors that foster psychological resilience in challenging life circumstances.

Furthermore, resilience demonstrated a significant positive direct effect on self-esteem ($\beta = 0.430$, $p < .001$), representing the strongest direct relationship among the proposed paths in the structural model. This result indicates that adolescents with higher levels of resilience are more likely to report greater self-esteem. The relatively large standardized coefficient suggests that resilience is a key psychological resource enabling fatherless adolescents to maintain a positive evaluation of themselves despite experiencing the absence of paternal support. These findings emphasize the central role of resilience in promoting healthy psychological adjustment and positive self-perceptions during adolescence.

In addition, social support was found to have a significant positive direct effect on self-esteem ($\beta = 0.092$, $p < .001$). Although the effect size was smaller than that of resilience, the relationship remained statistically significant, suggesting that social support contributes directly to

enhancing adolescents' self-esteem. This finding implies that emotional, informational, and instrumental support from significant others can reinforce adolescents' sense of self-worth, even beyond its indirect contribution through resilience.

Overall, the direct effects analysis provides empirical evidence that all hypothesized structural relationships are positive and statistically significant. Specifically, social support positively predicts resilience, resilience positively predicts self-esteem, and social support also directly enhances self-esteem. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1), Hypothesis 2 (H2), and Hypothesis 3 (H3) were supported, confirming the proposed relationships in the research model. These findings also suggest that resilience functions as an important psychological mechanism linking social support with positive self-evaluations among fatherless adolescents, although social support independently contributes to self-esteem as well.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

Variable Relationships	Coefficients	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	Lower	Upper	Remarks
Social Support (X) → Resilience (M) → Self-Esteem (Y)	0.080	0.010	8.189	< 0.001	0.061	0.099	H4 accepted

According to the *Indirect Effects* Table, social support shows an indirect effect on self-esteem through resilience, with a coefficient value of 0.080, which is

significant at $p < 0.001$. These results show a mediating effect, so H4 is accepted, revealing that resilience functions as a mediator.

Table 6. Total Effects

Variable Relationships	Coefficients	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	Lower	Upper	Remarks
Social Support (X) → Self-Esteem (Y)	0.171	0.009	19.865	< 0.001	0.155	0.188	Significant

According to the *Total Effects* Table, a total effect value of 0.171 indicates that social support significantly affects self-esteem. Thus, it can be concluded that resilience

acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between social support and self-esteem.

Path Analysis Results

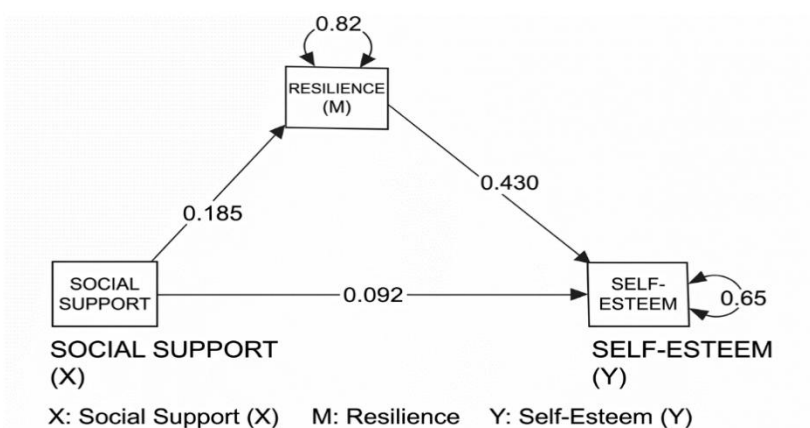


Image 5. Path Analysis

DISCUSSION

The present study advances the understanding of psychological adaptation among fatherless adolescents by demonstrating that resilience represents the principal mechanism through which social support contributes to the development of self-esteem (Crocetti, 2017). Rather than functioning independently, social support and resilience appear to operate as complementary protective resources that jointly facilitate positive psychological adjustment (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The structural model revealed that social support positively predicted resilience, resilience strongly predicted self-esteem, and social support also exerted a direct, although comparatively weaker, influence on self-esteem (Cohen & Wills, 1985). More importantly, resilience significantly mediated the relationship between social support and self-esteem, suggesting that external support becomes psychologically beneficial when it is transformed into internal adaptive capacities (Chung & al., 2017). This finding highlights that fatherless adolescents are not merely passive recipients of social resources; instead, they actively interpret, internalise, and utilise those resources to construct resilience, which subsequently shapes how they perceive their own worth (Cao & al., 2024). Consequently, self-esteem among fatherless adolescents is not solely determined by the availability of supportive relationships but also by the extent to which those relationships strengthen their capacity to cope with adversity and maintain psychological equilibrium (Chaeruman et al., 2022).

These findings can be understood through the perspective of resilience theory, which conceptualises resilience as a dynamic developmental process arising from continuous interactions between environmental protective factors and individual adaptive systems rather than as a fixed personality characteristic (Cabrera et al., 2018). Adolescence is recognised as a developmental stage characterised by rapid biological, cognitive, and psychosocial transitions. When this developmental period coincides with paternal absence, adolescents often encounter additional emotional challenges, including feelings of rejection, uncertainty regarding identity, diminished emotional security, and increased vulnerability to stress (Batubara et al., 2022). However, resilience theory argues that developmental risks do not inevitably produce maladjustment because positive adaptation emerges when protective systems remain accessible (Ariyanda et al., 2025). In this study, social support appears to function as one of these protective systems, providing emotional reassurance, practical assistance, informational guidance, and interpersonal acceptance that enable adolescents to reinterpret adverse experiences more constructively (Bajaj & Pande, 2016). Rather than eliminating stressful circumstances associated with fatherlessness, supportive relationships enhance adolescents' capacity to recover from setbacks, regulate emotional responses, and sustain optimism regarding future challenges. Therefore, resilience becomes the psychological process through which environmental resources are translated into adaptive developmental outcomes (Andani, 2018).

The strong association between resilience and self-esteem further illustrates that positive self-evaluation develops primarily through successful adaptation rather than through environmental support alone (Adriani et al., 2021). According to Rosenberg's conceptualisation of self-esteem, individuals construct global self-worth through cumulative experiences of competence, acceptance, and successful mastery of life challenges (Page et al., 2021). Fatherless adolescents frequently encounter experiences that threaten these developmental processes, including reduced paternal validation, inconsistent emotional attachment, and greater family-related stress (I. Adriansyah et al., 2026). Nevertheless, adolescents possessing higher resilience are more capable of regulating negative emotions, reframing adverse situations, maintaining confidence despite repeated difficulties, and viewing failures as temporary rather than defining personal characteristics (Yuan et al., 2023). These adaptive capacities reinforce positive self-perceptions and foster a stronger sense of personal efficacy, ultimately contributing to healthier self-esteem (Wu et al., 2022). The substantial direct effect observed in this study supports previous longitudinal findings by Wright (2016), which identified resilience as one of the strongest psychological predictors of self-esteem and overall mental well-being during adolescence. Similarly, Wilkinson and Walford (2016) demonstrated that resilience protects adolescents from psychological distress while simultaneously strengthening positive self-evaluation across diverse stressful life contexts.

Interestingly, although social support significantly predicted self-esteem, its direct contribution was relatively modest compared with the influence exerted through resilience (Wardoyo et al., 2021). This finding suggests that receiving emotional or instrumental support does not automatically lead to higher self-esteem (Wadin & Subardjo, 2026). Instead, adolescents must cognitively and emotionally process supportive experiences before these external resources become integrated into their self-concept. This interpretation is consistent with ecological and developmental perspectives proposed by Velickovic et al. (2020), which argue that developmental outcomes emerge not simply because supportive environments exist but because individuals actively interact with, interpret, and internalise environmental experiences over time. For fatherless adolescents, encouragement from mothers, teachers, peers, or extended family members may initially reduce feelings of loneliness and emotional deprivation (Wilkinson & Walford, 2016). However, sustained improvements in self-esteem occur only when these supportive interactions foster enduring psychological resources, including confidence, emotional regulation, persistence, and adaptive coping strategies. Consequently, resilience serves as the psychological bridge connecting supportive interpersonal relationships with long-term positive self-evaluation (Wardoyo et al., 2021).

The mediating role identified in this study also reinforces the broader protective-factor framework within developmental psychopathology (Wadin & Subardjo, 2026).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that social support contributes to improved mental health outcomes, yet the mechanisms underlying these associations often remain insufficiently explained (Velickovic et al., 2020). The present findings extend existing literature by providing empirical evidence that resilience functions as the internal mechanism translating supportive environments into positive psychological functioning among fatherless adolescents (A. L. Van Harmelen et al., 2021). This conclusion is consistent with Valencia and Soetikno (2022), who argued that resilience mediates the relationship between external protective factors and psychological well-being because individuals must first develop adaptive cognitive and emotional capacities before experiencing sustained mental health benefits. Likewise, Ungar (2011) demonstrated that high-quality interpersonal relationships significantly buffer the negative consequences of childhood adversity by strengthening adaptive psychological functioning over time. Taken together, these studies suggest that resilience should not be viewed merely as an outcome of social support but rather as a developmental process that transforms supportive experiences into enduring psychological strengths capable of protecting adolescents against future adversity (Tarsono, 2018).

Another noteworthy finding concerns the descriptive classification of all study variables within the moderate category. Although participants generally reported adequate levels of social support, resilience, and self-esteem, none of these psychological resources reached an optimal level (Sutanto & Suwartono, 2019). This pattern reflects the complex developmental reality experienced by fatherless adolescents. Most participants continued living with their biological mothers, indicating that maternal support remains the primary source of emotional security following paternal absence (Steinberg, 2020). Nevertheless, maternal support alone may not fully compensate for the unique developmental functions traditionally fulfilled by fathers, including identity affirmation, behavioural guidance, social modelling, and autonomy development (Sowislo & Orth, 2016). Consequently, while adolescents appear capable of adapting reasonably well to fatherlessness, they remain psychologically vulnerable, particularly when confronting more demanding developmental tasks or prolonged stress. These findings suggest that fatherless adolescents possess considerable adaptive potential but continue to require consistent emotional support and opportunities to strengthen internal coping resources throughout adolescence (J. Firnando et al., 2026).

From a practical perspective, these findings have important implications for interventions targeting fatherless adolescents. Programmes designed solely to increase perceived social support may produce limited psychological benefits unless they simultaneously enhance resilience (Yuan et al., 2023). Educational institutions, mental health practitioners, families, and community organizations should therefore prioritize resilience-building interventions that cultivate adaptive coping, emotional regulation, optimism,

problem-solving skills, cognitive flexibility, and self-efficacy (Wu et al., 2022). School-based mentoring programs, peer-support initiatives, resilience-focused counselling, and positive youth development interventions may represent effective approaches for helping fatherless adolescents transform supportive relationships into sustainable psychological strengths (Wright, 2016). Furthermore, because mothers often become the primary caregivers within fatherless families, parental education programmes that strengthen maternal emotional responsiveness and communication skills may indirectly promote adolescents' resilience and self-esteem (Wilkinson & Walford, 2016). Such integrated interventions acknowledge that psychological adjustment results not only from environmental assistance but also from adolescents' ability to internalise supportive experiences into enduring adaptive capacities (Wardoyo et al., 2021).

Despite its contributions, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the present findings (Wadin & Subardjo, 2026). First, approximately half of the original measurement items were removed during the measurement model evaluation, which may have reduced the constructs' capacity to capture the multidimensional nature of social support, resilience, and self-esteem comprehensively (Velickovic et al., 2020). Although the retained indicators demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, future studies should employ more robust measurement instruments to improve construct representation. Second, the cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation because reciprocal relationships among social support, resilience, and self-esteem cannot be ruled out. Longitudinal research would provide stronger evidence regarding developmental changes and the temporal sequence through which resilience emerges following paternal absence (V. Harmelen et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

Social support positively influences the self-esteem of fatherless adolescents both directly and indirectly through resilience, with resilience serving as a key mediating mechanism linking social support to self-esteem. These findings suggest that supportive social environments are most beneficial when they strengthen adolescents' adaptive capacity to cope with the psychological challenges associated with the absence of a father. Accordingly, resilience should be regarded as a primary target for interventions aimed at promoting the psychological well-being of fatherless adolescents. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs and incorporate additional psychological variables, such as attachment security, emotion regulation, coping strategies, or psychological well-being, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the developmental mechanisms underlying self-esteem among fatherless adolescents. Practically, these findings imply that schools, families, and mental health professionals should develop

resilience-based intervention programs integrated with efforts to strengthen social support from mothers, peers, teachers, and the broader community, thereby fostering healthier self-esteem and more optimal psychological development among fatherless adolescents.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of research involving human participants, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Prior to participation, all respondents were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were analysed anonymously to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no competing interests or conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

TRANSPARENCY OF DATA

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, the dataset is not publicly available.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed substantially to the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, manuscript preparation, and critical revision of the article. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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