

# The Relationship of Father Absenteeism and Peer Verbal Abuse to Aggressive Behavior in Adolescents from Broken Home Families

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received April 21, 2026

Revised May 27, 2023

Accepted June 24, 2026

**Keywords:** Aggressive Behavior,  
Fatherlessness, Verbal Peer Abuse

## ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the vulnerability of adolescents from broken *home* families to emotional problems and aggressive behavior due to reduced family roles and pressure from the social environment. This study aims to determine the effect of the absence of father figures and *verbal abuse* of peers on aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. The research method used is a quantitative correlational approach with *purposive sampling* techniques. The study respondents were 141 adolescents aged 13–18 years. After data analysis and *outlier* removal to meet the analysis assumptions, the number of final samples used was 89 respondents. Data were collected using a Likert scale instrument and analyzed through a two-predictor regression. The results showed that the absence of father figures and *verbal abuse* of peers simultaneously had a very significant effect on aggressive behavior with an effective contribution of 28.9% ( $F = 17.515$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). *Peer verbal abuse* contributed more dominantly by 22.7% compared to the absence of a father figure of 16.0%. In conclusion, strengthening the role of fathers and preventing *peer verbal abuse* is important to minimize aggressive behavior in adolescents from *broken homes*.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behavior is behavior that individuals do with the aim of hurting others physically or verbally. This behavior often appears in adolescence because adolescents are in an unstable phase of emotional development so that they are prone to internal and external conflicts. According to Stanford et.al. (2003), Aggressive behavior is an act that uses physical force to injure another individual or damage certain objects. Meanwhile, Shao et.al. (2014) explains that aggressive behavior in adolescents can negatively impact an individual's social relationships, self-adjustment, and psychological health. Adolescence itself is a transition period characterized by physical, emotional, social, and intellectual changes so that family conditions and social environment have a great influence on the formation of adolescent personality (Halilintar et.al., 2020). The family is the first environment in the formation of children's character and psychological development. Family disharmony or *broken home* can cause disruption in adolescent emotional development, such as the emergence of anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and aggressive behavior (Framanta, 2020). Recent research shows that home-broken teenagers tend to experience *psychological distress* due to the failure of family functions in providing a sense of security and emotional support (Ifdil et.al., 2025). In addition, Indari et.al (2021) It found that adolescents from *broken homes* had a higher risk of experiencing mental-emotional disorders than adolescents from harmonious families. One of the important factors in the family that affects adolescent development is the presence of a father figure. Fathers have a role in providing supervision, emotional support, discipline formation, and the development of children's confidence (Fajriyanti et.al., 2024). The real impact of the absence of a father can be seen on children's communication skills. Children who experience limited guidance from their fathers can experience obstacles in language development and vocabulary limitations so

that it is difficult to communicate effectively. This condition can increase the risk of aggressive behavior as a form of compensation for the vacancy of the father's role (Numawati et.al, 2025). The absence of a fatherless figure can lead to emotional instability, difficulty in self-management, and an increase in the tendency to aggressive behavior in adolescents. Ismail's Research et.al. (2024) shows that the higher the level of absence of the father figure, the higher the aggressive behavior of adolescents. Other research conducted by Luningham et.al. (2021) also explains that low paternity involvement is associated with increased anxiety, depression, and adolescent aggressiveness. In addition to family factors, the social environment, especially peers, also affects adolescents' aggressive behavior. One form of social pressure that occurs a lot is *verbal abuse*. *Verbal abuse* is the act of hurting another individual through words, such as insults, ridicule, threats, derogatory comments, or other forms of verbal communication that can cause psychological harm (Hasibuan & Sahputra, 2024). Verbal abuse is often considered humor or a simple joke that makes it difficult to identify as an act of violence, even though the behavior can have a negative impact on adolescent mental health Muhamad et.al. (2021).

This is in line with Mangundap et.al. (2023) which explains that *verbal abuse* can cause emotional wounds through speech that has a psychologically bad impact. In the research conducted Teicher et.al. (2010), *Verbal abuse* from peers has been shown to have a significant impact on adolescents' mental health and aggressive behavior. The results of the study showed that adolescents who experienced *verbal abuse* from peers had an increased risk of depression and anxiety. Although various studies have examined the effect of absenteeism and *verbal abuse* separately on aggressive behavior, studies that test both variables simultaneously in adolescents *with broken homes* are limited. Therefore, this study is important to see the relationship between the two factors together in explaining the tendency of aggressive behavior in adolescents from broken *home families*. Based on this description, the formulation of the problem in this study is whether the absence of father figures and *verbal abuse* of peers affects aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. This study also hypothesizes that the absence of a father figure is related to aggressive behavior, and peer *verbal abuse* also contributes to increasing this tendency. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach with intervariable relationship analysis to test the empirical relationship between father absenteeism, *peer verbal abuse*, and aggressive behavior. The purpose of this study is to find out empirically the influence of the absence of father figures and *verbal abuse* of peers on aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. This research is important because it is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of psychological science, especially in understanding aggressive behavior in adolescents. In addition, this research is also expected to provide practical implications in raising awareness of the importance of the role of fathers in adolescent growth and development, as well as emphasizing the importance of preventive management of peer influence in order to break the imitation of *verbal abuse* that often triggers aggressive actions in adolescents.

## 2. METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational method to test the relationship between the absence of a father figure and *the verbal abuse* of peers against aggressive behavior. This study focuses on two independent variables, namely the absence of a father figure (X1) and *the verbal abuse* of peers (X2), as well as one bound variable, namely aggressive behavior (Y). The population in this study is adolescents who experience a *broken home* situation. The sampling technique used is *non-probability sampling* with *the purposive sampling* method. The participant criteria included adolescents aged 13–18 years and coming from a *broken home family background*. The determination of the minimum sample size was carried out using GPower software version 3.1.9.4. The parameters used include a power value of 0.80, the number of predictors of 2, and an

estimated effect size of 0.15 in the medium category based on the assumption of Cohen (1992). Based on GPower's analysis, the minimum number of samples required is 68 respondents. In the implementation of the research, the initial data collected was 141 respondents. After the *data screening* process and the elimination of *outlier* data, the number of final samples used in statistical analysis was 89 respondents. The final sample count still meets the minimum sample limit based on G\*Power calculations. The research instrument consisted of three psychological scales, namely the scale of father absenteeism, *peer verbal abuse*, and aggressive behavior. The scale of absence of the father figure was compiled based on the aspects of the actual level of interaction of the father with the child, the level of the father's availability to the child, and the level of the father's responsibility to the child proposed by Lamb et al. (1985) with a total of 30 items. The scale of *peer verbal abuse* is compiled based on aspects of *character attacks*, *competence attacks*, *insults*, *maledictions*, *teasing*, *ridicule*, *profanity*, and *nonverbal emblems* according to Infante and Wigley (1986) as many as 32 items. Meanwhile, the scale of aggressive behavior is compiled based on aspects of physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility according to Buss and Perry (1992) with a total of 32 items. All instruments use the Likert scale with four answer choices, namely Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS).

**2.1 Data Screening Procedure**

Before statistical analysis is carried out, the researcher conducts a *data screening* process to ensure that the data used meets the feasibility of the analysis. The *screening process* is carried out by checking the completeness of the respondents' answers, the suitability of the respondents' characteristics with the research criteria, and the existence of extreme or *outlier data*. Of the 141 respondent data collected, there were 52 data that were issued because they were identified as *outliers*. *Outlier* detection was carried out using the *Z-score* method on the total score of each variable, with the data criteria being declared extreme if they have a *Z-score* value above +3.00 or below -3.00. After the outlier removal process, the final data used in the analysis was 89 respondents. This number still meets the minimum sample requirements based on G\*Power's calculations, which is 68 respondents.

**2.2 Validity and Reliability Tests**

The validity test of the instruments in this study was carried out using the *corrected item-total correlation* technique with the help of the IBM SPSS version 27 program. An item is declared valid if it has a *corrected item-total correlation* value of  $\geq 0.30$ . Next, reliability tests are performed using *Cronbach's Alpha coefficient* to measure the consistency level of the instrument. The instrument is declared reliable if it obtains a reliability value of  $\geq 0.70$ .

**Validity Test**

**Table 1.** Validity Test of Father Figure Absence (X1)

No	Aspects	Aitem		Quantity
		Unfavorable	Favorable	
1.	The actual level of interaction of the father with his child	1,3,5,7,9	2,4,6,8,10	10
2.	The level of availability of fathers for their children	11,13,15,17,19	12,14,16,18,20	10
3.	The level of responsibility they have towards their children.	21,23,25,27,29	22,24,26,28,30	10
<i>Total</i>		<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>30</i>

Description:

Sign (\*) = Dropped Aitem

No Marks = Valid Aitem

**Table 2.** Peer Verbal Abuse Validity Test (X2)

No.	Aspects	Aitem		Total
		Unfavorable	Favorable	
1.	Character Attacks	1,4	2,3	4
2.	Competence Attacks	5,8	6,7	4
3.	Insults	9,12	10,11	4
4.	Maledictions	13,16	14,15	4
5.	Teasing	17,20	18,19	4
6.	Ridicule	21,24	22,23	4
7.	Profanity	25,28	26,27	4
8.	Nonverbal Emblems	29,32	30,31	4
Total		16	16	32

Description:

Sign (\*) = Dropped Aitem

No Marks = Valid Aitem

**Table 3.** Aggressive Behavior Validity Test (Y)

	Aspects	Aitem		Total
		Unfavorable	Favorable	
1.	Physical Aggression	1,3,6,8	2,4,5,7	8
2.	Verbal Aggression	9,11,*13,15*	10,12,*14,16*	8
3.	Anger	17,19,22,23*	18,20,21,24*	8
4.	Hostility	25,27,30,32	26,28,29,31	8
Total		16	16	32

Description:

Sign (\*) = Dropped Aitem

No Marks = Valid Aitem

### Reliability Test

**Table 4.** Reliability Test

No	Measuring instruments	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Absence of father figure (X1)	30	0,963
2	Verbal abuse of peers (X2)	32	0,962
3	Aggressive behavior (Y)	32	0,803

Based on the table above using *Cronbach's Alpha* coefficient, it shows that all research instruments have a good level of reliability. The father absence instrument (X1) obtained a value of  $\alpha = 0.963$  (reliable – very good category), the peer verbal abuse instrument (X2) obtained a value of  $\alpha = 0.962$  (reliable – very good category), and the aggressive behavior instrument (Y) obtained a value of  $\alpha = 0.803$  (reliable – good category). Thus, all instruments used in this study were declared reliable. Data analysis was carried out using two-predictor regression analysis and *Product Moment* correlation processed through the SPSS 27.0 for Windows program. A two-predictor regression analysis was used to test a major hypothesis regarding the relationship between the absence of a father figure and *verbal abuse* of peers simultaneously with aggressive behavior in *broken home* adolescents. Meanwhile, *Product Moment correlation analysis* was used to test the partial relationship between each independent variable and aggressive behavior. Before the hypothesis test is carried out, an assumption test is first carried out which includes a normality test and a linearity test.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

The results of this study are presented based on data that has been processed using IBM SPSS version 27. The data displayed included respondent descriptions, variable categorization, assumption test results, and hypothesis test results. The presentation of results is carried out in the form of a table

so that the data is easier to understand and in accordance with the formulation of the research problem. The description of the respondents in this study included gender and age. This data is used to provide an overview of the characteristics of respondents involved in the study. The following is presented data on the distribution of respondents by gender.

**Table 5.** Respondent Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	27,7%
Women	102	72,3%
Total	141	100%

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that most of the respondents in this study are female with a percentage of 72.3%, while the respondents are male at 27.7%. The following is presented distribution data for respondents based on age.

**Table 6.** Respondent Age Data

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13- 15 years old	28	19,9%
16-18 years old	113	80,1%
Total	141	100%

Based on Table 6, the majority of respondents were in the age range of 16–18 years old at 80.1%, while respondents aged 13–15 years were 19.9%. This age distribution suggests that most of the participants are in the mid-teenage phase. Variable categorization was carried out to determine the tendency of the level of absenteeism of father figures, *verbal abuse* of peers, and aggressive behavior in respondents after the data screening process was carried out. This categorization table was added because in the discussion section there is an interpretation of the medium and high categories. The following are presented the results of the dominant categorization of each research variable.

**Table 7.** Categorization of Research Variables

Variable	N	Category Dominance	Frequency	Percentage
Absence of Father Figure (X1)	89	Height	30	33,71%
Verbal Peer Abuse (X2)	89	Medium	32	35,96%
Aggressive Behavior (Y)	89	Medium	38	42,70%

Based on Table 7, the absence of father figures was in the high category of 30 respondents (33.71%), while peer *verbal abuse* was in the medium category of 32 respondents (35.96%) and aggressive behavior was in the medium category of 38 respondents (42.70%). These findings show that the broken home adolescents in this study have psychosocial tendencies that need attention. The normality test was carried out using *the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test* with the help of SPSS 27, with the criteria of normal distribution data if the significance value ( $p > 0.05$ ). Of the 141 initial data, 52 data (36.88%) were identified as *outliers* through *the Z-score* method with a value limit above +3.00 or below -3.00. After the *data screening process*, the number of final samples analyzed was 89 respondents and still met the minimum sample limit based on GPower, which was 68 respondents.

**Table 8.** Normality Test

No	Variable	N	K-SZ	p	Description
1.	Absence of Father Figure (X1)	89	0,091	0,067	Normal Distribution
2.	Verbal Peer Abuse (X2)	89	0,088	0,088	Normal Distribution
3.	Aggressive Behavior (Y)	89	0,080	0,200	Normal Distribution

Based on Table 8, the variable Absence of the Father Figure shows a *Kolmogorov–Smirnov Z* value of 0.091 with a significance of 0.067 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The *Peer Verbal Abuse* variable showed a K-

SZ value of 0.088 with a significance of 0.088 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The Aggressive Behavior variable showed a K-SZ value of 0.080 with a significance of 0.200 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Based on all these results, it can be concluded that the three research variables have a normal data distribution. The linearity test is carried out to ensure that the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable is linear. The relationship is expressed linear when the significance value of *deviation from linearity* shows  $p > 0.05$ . The following are presented the results of the linearity test between the absence of the father figure and aggressive behavior.

**Table 9.** Results of the linearity test between the absence of the father figure and aggressive behavior

No.	Variable	F	Sig (p)	Description
1.	Father Figure Absence and Aggressive Behavior	0,768	0,768	Linier

Based on Table 9, the results of the linearity test between the variables of Father Figure Absence and Aggressive Behavior obtained an F value of 0.768 with a significance value of 0.768 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results show that the relationship between the two variables meets the assumption of linearity. The following are presented the results of the linearity test between *peer verbal abuse* and aggressive behavior. Results of the linearity test between the variables of *Peer Verbal Abuse* and Aggressive Behavior obtained an F value of 1.200 with a significance value of 0.274 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results show that the relationship between the two variables meets the assumption of linearity.

**Table 10.** Results of the Linearity Test Between Peer Verbal Abuse and Aggressive Behavior

No.	Variable	F	Sig (p)	Description
1.	Peer Verbal Abuse and Aggressive Behavior	1,200	0,274	Linier

Major hypothesis testing was performed using two-predictor regression analysis with the help of the SPSS 27 for Windows program. The major hypothesis in this study is that there is a relationship between the absence of the father figure and *the simultaneous verbal abuse* of peers and aggressive behavior in broken *home* adolescents. The following are presented the results of the major hypothesis test using two-predictor regression analysis.

**Table 11.** Major Hypothesis Test Results

No.	R	R Squared	F	Sig (p)
1.	0,538	0,289	17,515	0,000

Based on Table 11, the results of regression analysis showed a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) with an R value of 0.538 and F of 17.515. An R Square value of 0.289 indicates that the absence of Father Figures and *Peer Verbal Abuse* together make an effective contribution of 28.9% to Aggressive Behavior. Referring to Cohen's interpretation, the  $R^2$  value of 0.289 falls into the category of *moderate effect size*. This means that both independent variables have a significant contribution in explaining aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents, although there is still a 71.1% variation in aggressive behavior influenced by other factors outside of this study. Thus, the major hypothesis that there is a very significant relationship between the absence of the father figure and the *verbal abuse of peers* and Aggressive Behavior in broken home adolescents is accepted. The first minor hypothesis test was conducted to determine the relationship between the absence of the father figure and aggressive behavior. The following are presented the results of the analysis of the relationship between the absence of the father figure and aggressive behavior.

**Table 12.** Results of the Analysis of the Relationship between Father Absenteeism and Aggressive Behavior

No.	Variable	R	R Squared	Sig (p)
1.	Father Figure Absence and Aggressive Behavior	0,400	0,160	0,000

Based on Table 12, the results of the *product moment test* obtained a correlation coefficient value of  $r_{xy}$  of 0.400 with a significance of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). These results showed a significant positive relationship between Father Figure Absence and Aggressive Behavior, with an effective contribution of 16.0%. The direction of positive relationships shows that the higher the level of absence of the father figure, the higher the tendency to aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. On the other hand, the lower the absence of the father figure, the lower the tendency to aggressive behavior. The first minor hypothesis test was conducted to determine the relationship between the absence of the father figure and aggressive behavior.

**Table 13.** Results of Analysis of Verbal Relationships of Peer Abuse and Aggressive Behavior

No.	Variable	R	R Square	Sig. (p)
1	Peer Verbal Abuse and Aggressive Behavior	0,476	0,227	0,000

Based on Table 13, the results of the *Product Moment test* showed a correlation value of  $r_{x_2y} = 0.476$  with a significance of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). These results show that *peer verbal abuse* has a significant positive relationship with aggressive behavior, with an effective contribution of 22.7%. This means that the higher the experience of *verbal abuse* from peers, the higher the tendency to aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. The second minor hypothesis is accepted. *Peer verbal abuse* has a greater contribution, which is 22.7%, compared to the absence of a father figure of 16.0%. Both values are derived from partial analysis so they cannot be summed directly. In the simultaneous analysis, the two variables together explained 28.9% of the variation in aggressive behavior and belonged to the moderate effect category based on Cohen's interpretation.

### 3.2 Discussion

The results of the study showed that the absence of father figures and *verbal abuse* of peers simultaneously had a very significant relationship with aggressive behavior in *broken home* adolescents. An R value of 0.538 with a significance of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicates a statistically strong relationship. An  $R^2$  value of 0.289 indicates that these two variables contribute 28.9% to aggressive behavior, while the remaining 71.1% are influenced by other factors, such as self-control, parenting, emotion regulation, school conditions, social media exposure, and individual personality characteristics. Referring to Cohen's interpretation, the  $R^2$  value of 0.289 is included in the category of moderate effects, so the absence of father figures and *peer verbal abuse* can be understood as a significant factor in explaining aggressive behavior in broken home adolescents. These findings reinforce the view that aggressive behavior in adolescents cannot be explained by a single factor, but rather is formed through interactions between family conditions and the social environment.

Adolescence is a developmental phase characterized by emotional, social, and intellectual changes so that individuals are more easily influenced by experiences in their immediate environment (Halilintar et al., 2020). The family remains the basic environment in the formation of a child's personality, so the condition of a *broken home* can cause psychological pressure, such as anger, fear, depression, and guilt (Framanta, 2020; Ifdil et al., 2025). This condition can make adolescents have difficulty managing emotions so that they are more susceptible to displaying aggressive behavior. The absence of a father figure is positively related to aggressive behavior. Fathers have an important function in providing supervision, emotional support, discipline formation, and a sense of security for children (Susana et.al 2024). Father's involvement is also related to the development of emotional regulation and control of children's behavior Cabrera et.al (2018). When the father figure is absent or less involved, adolescents can lose one of the sources of social control and emotional support that play a role in suppressing aggressive behavior. This is in line with Flouri & Buchanan (2003) which suggests that low paternal involvement is related to increased external behavior problems in children and adolescents. The contribution of the absence of the father figure in this study was lower than that

of *the verbal abuse* of peers because the influence of the absence of the father tends to be indirect. The impact can be influenced by other factors, such as the quality of the relationship with the mother, extended family support, surrogate parenting, and the adolescent's ability to adjust. In Indonesian culture, childcare often does not only rely on the father and mother, but also involves extended families, such as grandparents, siblings, or close relatives. The existence of such a surrogate can be a protective factor that reduces the psychological impact of the father's absence.

The role of the father in some Indonesian families is also often understood as a breadwinner, rule-giver, and symbol of family authority. The emotional absence of the father is not always immediately realized as a source of behavioral problems if there are still other figures who carry out daily parenting functions. This may explain why the absence of the father figure remains significantly related to aggressive behavior, but the contribution is not as large as the experience of verbal abuse from peers. Peer verbal abuse showed a more dominant contribution to aggressive behavior. Verbal can be in the form of insults, ridicule, threats, negative nicknames, harsh words, and other forms of communication that degrade an individual's self-esteem (Hasibuan & Sahputra, 2024). These experiences can cause anger, shame, resentment, inferiority, and a desire to retaliate for the negative treatment received. Adolescence is characterized by a great need to be accepted into social groups, so peer pressure can have a strong psychological impact on adolescent behavior (Santrock, 2019). The dominance of the influence of peer verbal abuse can also be explained through Bandura's (1971) social learning theory. Adolescents who frequently receive or witness verbal abuse can learn that aggression is a natural way to respond to conflict. When insults, taunts, or abusive words occur repeatedly in a friendship environment, teens can mimic those communication patterns and turn them into aggressive behaviors in social interactions.

Verbal abuse is not only a painful experience, but it is also a model of behavior that adolescents can learn and repeat. The results of the variable categorization showed that most of the respondents were in the high category for the absence of a father figure, as well as the medium category for *verbal* peer abuse and aggressive behavior. These findings show that the *home-broken* teenagers in this study have experienced psychosocial conditions that are quite risky, although not at a very extreme level. This condition still needs to be considered because aggressive behavior in adolescence can develop into more serious behavioral problems if left untreated, such as juvenile delinquency, interpersonal violence, or antisocial behavior. The results of this study confirm that aggressive behavior in adolescents *with broken homes is influenced by a combination of family and peer factors. The absence of a father figure plays a role in weakening emotional support and behavioral control, while peer verbal abuse* provides more direct social pressure and is more often experienced by adolescents in daily life. The practical implications of these findings are the importance of strengthening the role of fathers or paternal surrogates in the family, as well as the need to prevent *verbal abuse* in the school and friends environment. Schools, families, and social environments need to build healthy communication patterns so that verbal violence is not considered a regular joke that can trigger aggressive behavior.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that there was a very significant positive relationship simultaneously between *fatherlessness* and *verbal peer abuse* and aggressive behavior in adolescents from *broken homes* ( $F = 17.515$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ ). These two variables together contributed 28.9% to adolescent aggressive behavior, while the remaining 71.1% were influenced by other factors outside of the study. Partially, *peer verbal abuse* contributed more dominantly by 22.7% ( $r = 0.476$ ) compared to the absence of a father figure of 16.0% ( $r = 0.400$ ). These findings suggest that experiences of verbal abuse from peers have a stronger influence on adolescents' tendency to

aggressive behavior. The implications of this study show the importance of early intervention through strengthening the role of the family, especially the father figure or other caregiver figures, as well as the prevention of *verbal abuse* in the peer environment. Schools, families, and social environments need to pay attention to adolescents' communication patterns so that verbal violence is not considered a common occurrence that can trigger aggressive behavior. Further research is recommended to involve a larger sample count and examine other factors, such as self-control, emotion regulation, parenting, school environment, social media, and individual personality characteristics so that the understanding of aggressive behavior in adolescents *in broken homes* becomes more comprehensive.

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