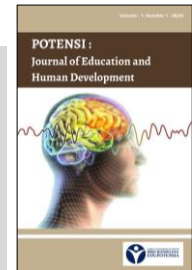


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## Mental Toughness Profiles and Their Association with Grief Levels in Orphanage Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

Grief is an emotional experience that arises from significant loss and can affect the psychological well-being of adolescents, particularly those living in orphanages. In this context, mental toughness serves as a protective factor that plays an important role in helping adolescents manage emotional stress and adapt to challenging situations. This study aims to analyze the correlation between grief levels measured using the Prolonged Grief Disorder Revised (PGD-R13) and mental toughness measured using the Mental Toughness Scale (SKM-24) among orphanage adolescents. The study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The findings indicate that a portion of the adolescents fell into the normal grief category, while others showed symptoms of syndromal grief and prolonged grief. Regarding mental toughness, most adolescents were in the moderate category, although a significant proportion scored low on the control and confidence dimensions. Correlation analysis revealed a negative relationship between grief levels and mental toughness, indicating that the higher the grief symptoms experienced by the adolescents, the lower their level of mental toughness. These findings suggest that experiences of loss and instability in caregiving environments influence adolescents' ability to manage psychological distress and maintain adaptive functioning. This study highlights the importance of interventions focused on strengthening emotion regulation, enhancing self-confidence, and providing psychological support to help orphanage adolescents cope with grief while improving their mental toughness.



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## Introduction

Grief is an emotional response that arises from a significant loss, such as the death of a loved one. During adolescence, this process becomes more complex because it coincides with a critical developmental phase that demands identity stability and strong emotional support (Sari & Mahpur, 2022). Handayani and Dian (2024) note that adolescents often exhibit grief-related symptoms in the form of profound sadness, anger, disorientation, diminished motivation, and disruptions in daily functioning. When grief remains unresolved, some adolescents are at risk of developing Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD), which negatively affects psychological well-being and heightens the likelihood of depression and anxiety. This condition not only impairs adolescents' ability to adapt to life changes but also directly influences their emotional balance and social development (Falala et al., 2024).

The grief experience becomes more complex for adolescents living in orphanages. They not only face losses due to death but also endure emotional losses stemming from separation from their families, changes in their living environment, and the absence of stable caregiving figures (Ibda, 2023). This form of ambiguous loss can create emotional confusion and hinder an adaptive grieving process. Limited affective support and the lack of secure attachment place orphaned adolescents at greater risk of experiencing prolonged grief (Sochos & Aleem, 2022). Understanding the dynamics of grief within this context provides an essential basis for identifying adolescents' emotional needs and designing psychological interventions that can help them cope with loss in a healthier and more adaptive manner (Ogden & Hagen, 2018). Under such circumstances, adolescents' capacity to endure and recover from intense emotional experiences becomes an aspect that cannot be overlooked (Craig, 2017).

Mental toughness is an essential component of adolescents' psychological development (McGeown et al., 2017), particularly as they navigate various demands, pressures, and transitions on their path toward adulthood (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020). Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, making young people more vulnerable to stressors and life challenges (Mastorci et al., 2024). In this context, mental toughness serves as a fundamental capacity that enables adolescents to remain emotionally stable, exercise self-control, and sustain motivation even when confronted with difficult circumstances (Gucciardi, 2007). When mental toughness is well-developed, adolescents tend to demonstrate more adaptive abilities in managing psychological stress, recovering from setbacks, and responding more positively to challenging situations (Del Ciampo & Del Ciampo, 2020).

The concept of mental toughness initially emerged within the field of sports psychology, but recent research indicates that it holds strong relevance for adolescent development, education, and mental health (Gucciardi et al., 2021). Mental toughness is understood as the capacity to maintain optimal performance and functioning when facing stressors, as well as to interpret obstacles as opportunities for growth (Clough & Strycharczyk, 2011). Adolescents with high levels of mental toughness typically demonstrate strong emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and effective problem-solving skills, particularly in high-pressure situations (Silmaufar & Jannah, 2023). The most widely used framework for understanding mental toughness is the 4C model, which encompasses four core dimensions: control, commitment, challenge, and confidence (Gucciardi, 2017). Control refers to the ability to manage emotions and responses when under stress (Clough et al., 2002). Commitment relates to an individual's perseverance in completing tasks (Savage et al., 2019). Challenge reflects the tendency to view difficulties as opportunities for self-development (Prisniakova et al., 2023). Meanwhile, confidence refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities to solve problems and interact effectively with others (Halilsoy, 2024). Together, these four dimensions interact to form a comprehensive profile of adolescents' mental toughness.

Nugroho et al. (2024) highlight that mental toughness plays a highly significant role in adolescents' mental health and overall functioning. Research shows that adolescents with high levels of mental toughness are at lower risk of experiencing depression, anxiety, academic stress, and difficulties in social adjustment (Aziz et al., 2023). Conversely, adolescents with low mental toughness tend to be more vulnerable to psychological pressure, are more likely to give up when facing obstacles, and often struggle to regulate their emotions and maintain interpersonal relationships (Gerber et al., 2015). The importance of mental toughness becomes even more pronounced when examined in the context of adolescents living in orphanages. This group is considered highly vulnerable because many of them have experienced loss, abandonment, neglect, or unstable family conditions (Sugara et al., 2023). Such circumstances affect not only their emotional well-being but also their identity development, attachment formation, and capacity to manage everyday psychological stress (Komari & Aslan, 2025). Unmet emotional needs such as a sense of safety, warmth, and secure attachment with primary caregivers can hinder the development of mental toughness (Palacio et al., 2020). Adolescents living in orphanages often face challenges in emotion regulation, frequently feel threatened, possess low self-confidence, and tend to avoid challenging situations (Nugroho et al., 2024). These conditions make mental toughness a critically important developmental aspect for them (Gerber et al., 2015).

Li (2024) notes that the collective nature of orphanage environments characterized by limited emotional support and varying quality of caregiving can influence adolescents' mental toughness profiles. Several studies indicate that adolescents living in orphanages are more vulnerable to psychological distress, more prone to emotional exhaustion, and tend to have lower levels of self-confidence compared to those living with their families (Katkar et al., 2021). In such conditions, mental toughness serves as an important protective factor that enables them to cope with life challenges, adjust to social environments, and develop a positive sense of identity (Gucciardi et al., 2015). Adolescents with strong mental toughness are more capable of interpreting negative experiences adaptively, responding to stress with constructive strategies, and recovering more quickly from emotionally painful events (Apriani & Listiyandini, 2019). Anthony et al. (2016) emphasize that mapping the

mental toughness tendencies of adolescents in orphanages is essential for understanding their psychological conditions more comprehensively. Each adolescent possesses varying strengths and weaknesses across the four dimensions of mental toughness, and a clear profile can assist counselors, orphanage staff, and educational institutions in designing targeted intervention programs (Murod & Jannah, 2021). By identifying which dimensions fall into the lower categories—such as self-control or confidence—interventions can be directed to strengthen those specific areas (Coulter et al., 2018). A mental toughness profile also provides insight into the risk and protective factors that influence how adolescents in orphanages navigate various life stressors (McGeown et al., 2017).

In addition, research in Indonesia that specifically describes and analyzes the mental toughness profiles of adolescents living in orphanages remains limited (Adelina et al., 2024). A thorough understanding of this condition is essential as a foundation for developing guidance and counseling programs that are more contextual, empathetic, and aligned with the psychological needs of orphaned adolescents (Syakur & Budianto, 2024). The absence of comprehensive information regarding their mental toughness profiles constitutes a research gap that needs to be addressed. Therefore, this study aims to examine the mental toughness tendencies of orphanage adolescents who exhibit grief symptoms.

## Method

### Participants

This study employed a quantitative method with a descriptive design and involved a population of adolescents residing in orphanages in Tasikmalaya. From this population, a total of 72 adolescents were selected as participants using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was chosen because participant selection was based on the aims of the study rather than stratification, randomization, or geographical distribution (Suriani & Jailani, 2023). The inclusion criteria consisted of adolescents aged 12–18 years, having a family member who had passed away, residing in the orphanage for at least one year, and voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study. This sampling technique was used to obtain an accurate depiction of the mental toughness profiles of orphanage adolescents who exhibit grief symptoms.

### Measure

#### Prolonged Grief Disorder–13 Revised (PGD-13-R)

The Prolonged Grief Disorder–13 Revised was developed by Prigerson et al. (2021) and later adapted by Muhtadi and Ahman (2024) for use among adolescent populations in Indonesia. This instrument is designed to assess manifestations of prolonged grief in accordance with the diagnostic guidelines of the ICD-11 and DSM-5-TR. It consists of 13 items grouped into three main domains: persistent and distressing grief symptoms (e.g., ongoing yearning), emotional and cognitive difficulties (such as disbelief or guilt), and impairments that affect the ability to carry out daily activities. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Higher scores indicate more severe levels of grief. The instrument demonstrates excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.888.

#### Mental Toughness Scale (SKM)

The Mental Toughness Scale used in this study was developed based on the 4C concept introduced by Clough et al. (2002), which encompasses four main components: control, commitment, challenge, and confidence. This scale consists of 24 items representing each dimension, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of an individual's ability to regulate emotions and situations, maintain commitment, confront challenges, and build self-confidence. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total score reflects the level of mental toughness, with higher scores indicating stronger self-regulation abilities and greater psychological resilience. The score categorization is divided into three levels low, moderate, and high to provide a clearer descriptive overview of the mental toughness profiles of adolescents living in orphanages. This instrument demonstrates exceptionally high internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.98, indicating that all items consistently measure the construct of mental toughness with strong accuracy. With its structure and level of consistency, the Mental Toughness Scale is considered highly suitable for evaluating adolescents' capacity to cope with psychological pressure and challenges within the context of this study.

## Procedure

This study was conducted through several systematically organized stages. First, the researcher completed administrative preparations and coordinated with the orphanage to determine the schedule and location of the research activities. Before data collection began, the researcher and field assistants participated in a brief training session that included an explanation of the study's objectives, instructions on administering the PGD-13-R and the Mental Toughness Scale, and communication strategies appropriate for adolescents living in orphanages. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were prepared to ensure that the data collection process was carried out consistently across all groups. During the data collection stage, participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study and then provided their consent to participate. Each adolescent completed two research questionnaires: the PGD-13-R and the Mental Toughness Scale. The questionnaires were administered in groups with individualized assistance to help participants understand the instructions without influencing their responses. After the forms were completed, the researcher checked the questionnaires to ensure that the data were complete and suitable for analysis. The verified data were then processed to assess the levels of grief, mental toughness, and the relationship between the two variables. The final stage involved preparing the research report, which served as the basis for developing recommendations for psychological support in the orphanage setting.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis in this study was used to evaluate the levels of grief and mental toughness among adolescents living in orphanages. The initial stage of the analysis involved presenting descriptive statistics to illustrate participant characteristics such as age, gender, and their experiences of loss. Grief levels were assessed using the PGD-13-R instrument, which has a score range of 10 to 50. The total scores were categorized into three levels: 10–29 indicating normal grief, 30–50 indicating syndromal-level symptomatology when daily activities are not impaired, and 30–50 indicating Prolonged Grief Disorder when daily functioning is disrupted. These categories provide a structured overview of the varying intensities of grief experienced by adolescents, ranging from adaptive mourning to grief that may interfere with everyday functioning. Mental toughness was measured using the Mental Toughness Scale (SKM-24). The score ranges for this scale include 24–62 for low, 63–84 for moderate, and 85–120 for high mental toughness. To examine differences in mental toughness based on gender, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. This analysis enabled the researcher to determine whether significant differences existed in mental toughness capacities between male and female adolescents. Subsequently, Pearson's correlation analysis was applied to assess the linear relationship between grief and mental toughness. The purpose of this analysis was to identify whether increases or decreases in grief levels were associated with changes in mental toughness scores. Through this series of complementary analyses, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how experiences of loss interact with adolescents' psychological capacities in coping with stress within alternative care environments such as orphanages.

## Results

Based on the demographic data presented in Table 1, the table illustrates the demographic characteristics of the students who participated in this study. In terms of gender, the number of male participants was slightly higher than that of female participants, with 37 males (51.38%) and 35 females (48.61%). This relatively balanced proportion allows for a more representative analysis between the two gender groups. In the age category, participants ranged from 12 to 19 years old, with the largest distribution found in the 14–15 age group, each consisting of 17 participants (23.61%). The next highest proportion was at age 17 with 11 participants (15.27%), followed by age 18 with 9 participants (12.50%), and age 16 with 8 participants (11.11%). Meanwhile, 7 participants (9.72%) were 13 years old, 2 participants (2.77%) were 12 years old, and the smallest proportion was at age 19 with only 1 participant (1.38%). Overall, these data indicate that the majority of participants were in the middle adolescence stage. In terms of educational level, most students were from junior high school, totaling 40 participants (55.55%). Additionally, 19 students were from senior high school (26.38%), 10 students from vocational school (13.88%), and 3 students from Islamic senior high school (4.16%). This composition shows that the study participants were predominantly adolescents from the lower secondary education level. For the grief criteria category, most students were in the normal grief category, with 55 participants (76.38%). A total of 13 students (18.05%) showed syndromal-level symptomatology, indicating more significant grief symptoms that did not yet meet the criteria for Prolonged Grief Disorder. Meanwhile, only 4 students (5.55%) met the criteria for Prolonged Grief Disorder. These findings illustrate that although most adolescents experienced a normative grieving process, a smaller group demonstrated more intense grief symptoms that



require further psychological attention. Detailed data regarding participant characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Data of Students

Aspect	n	Persentase
Gender		
Male	37	51,38%
Female	35	48,61%
Age		
12 years old	2	2,77%
13 years old	7	9,72%
14 years old	17	23,61%
15 years old	17	23,61%
16 years old	8	11,11%
17 years old	11	15,27%
18 years old	9	12,50%
19 years old	1	1,38%
Education		
Junior High School	40	55,55%
Senior High School	19	26,38%
Islamic Senior High School	3	4,16%
Vocational High School	10	13,88%
Grief Criteria		
Normal Grief	55	76,38%
Prolonged Grief Disorder	4	5,55%
Syndromal Level Symptomatology	13	18,05%

Based on the overall description of mental toughness among adolescents in the orphanage, the findings of the study indicate the following: Among all participants, the majority 48 adolescents (66.67%) were categorized as having a moderate level of mental toughness. This suggests that most adolescents possess a sufficient degree of psychological resilience to manage everyday stress, although they may remain vulnerable when faced with more severe or prolonged stressors. Meanwhile, 10 adolescents (13.89%) fell into the low category, indicating limited mental toughness in several aspects such as emotional control, commitment, and self-confidence. Adolescents in this group may face difficulties in maintaining adaptive responses when encountering challenges or environmental pressures. On the other hand, 14 adolescents (19.44%) were categorized as having high mental toughness, indicating that a smaller proportion of participants demonstrated strong resilience. Adolescents in this category are able to manage stress effectively, maintain strong commitment, and perceive challenges as opportunities for growth. These results highlight that although most adolescents fall within the moderate category, particular attention should be directed toward those in the low category, as they may be at greater risk for psychological difficulties. Meanwhile, the presence of adolescents in the high category reflects resilience and adaptive coping capacities. Detailed distribution of mental toughness levels is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. General Overview of Mental Toughness in Adolescents

Range	Category	F	Persentase
24-62	Low	10	13,89%
63-84	Medium	48	66,67%
85-120	High	14	19,44%

Based on the overall description of mental toughness by gender, the findings indicate a distinct distribution pattern between male and female adolescents. The results show a significant difference in mental toughness between the two groups. Overall, male adolescents demonstrated higher mental toughness scores ( $M = 78.56$ ;  $SD = 9.68$ ) compared to females ( $M = 69.91$ ;  $SD = 11.86$ ), with  $F = 11.55$  and  $p = 0.001$ , indicating a statistically significant difference. This pattern is consistently observed across all dimensions. For the Control dimension, males recorded a higher mean score of 18.86 ( $SD = 3.39$ ) than females at 16.68 ( $SD = 3.32$ ), with  $F = 7.56$  and  $p = 0.008$ , suggesting that males possess better emotional and self-regulation abilities. In the Commitment

dimension, males ( $M = 21.29$ ;  $SD = 2.57$ ) again outperformed females ( $M = 19.31$ ;  $SD = 3.38$ ), with  $F = 7.89$  and  $p = 0.006$ , indicating stronger perseverance and goal commitment among male adolescents. A similar pattern appears in the Challenge dimension, with males scoring higher ( $M = 19.48$ ;  $SD = 3.28$ ) than females ( $M = 16.85$ ;  $SD = 3.68$ ), supported by  $F = 10.22$  and  $p = 0.002$ , showing that males are more likely to perceive challenges as opportunities for growth. In the Confidence dimension, males ( $M = 18.91$ ;  $SD = 2.88$ ) again scored higher than females ( $M = 17.05$ ;  $SD = 3.63$ ), with  $F = 5.82$  and  $p = 0.018$ , indicating a significant difference in self-confidence. Overall, all dimensions of mental toughness demonstrate a consistent pattern in which male adolescents show higher levels of mental toughness than females, highlighting the role of gender in shaping variations in mental toughness among orphanage adolescents. These findings indicate that although most male and female adolescents fall within the moderate category, males exhibit a higher proportion of high mental toughness scores as well as higher mean scores across all dimensions. Detailed distributions of mental toughness by gender are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Overview of Mental Toughness Based on Gender

Aspects	Male		Female		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Mental Toughness	78,56	9,68	69,91	11,86	11,55	0,001
Control	18,86	3,39	16,68	3,32	7,56	0,008
Comitmen	21,29	2,57	19,31	3,38	7,89	0,006
Challenge	19,48	3,28	16,85	3,68	10,22	0,002
Confidance	18,91	2,88	17,05	3,63	5,82	0,018

The correlation analysis indicated that grief was negatively associated with all aspects of mental toughness among orphanage adolescents. Overall, grief showed a correlation of  $-0.164$  with total mental toughness, suggesting that higher levels of grief were linked to lower levels of mental toughness, although the relationship fell within the weak category. When examined across the 4C dimensions, the pattern of negative associations remained consistent. In the control dimension ( $r = -0.121$ ), grief was associated with reduced ability to regulate emotions and manage situational pressure. The commitment dimension showed the strongest negative correlation ( $r = -0.204$ ), indicating that grief had a more substantial impact on adolescents' ability to persist, complete tasks, and maintain commitment to their goals. In the challenge dimension, grief demonstrated a very weak negative correlation ( $r = -0.104$ ), yet it still reflected a tendency for grieving adolescents to have greater difficulty viewing pressure as an opportunity for growth. Additionally, the confidence dimension showed a negative correlation ( $r = -0.133$ ), meaning that increases in grief were associated with slight reductions in adolescents' self-confidence when facing difficult situations or engaging in social interactions. Overall, although the strength of the correlations was weak, the consistent pattern of negative relationships suggests that grief experiences do have implications for orphanage adolescents' ability to cope, manage stress, and foster a sense of confidence. These findings highlight the importance of emotional support and psychological interventions for adolescents who have experienced significant loss. Detailed distributions regarding the correlations between grief and mental toughness are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation Between Grief and Mental Toughness in Adolescents in Orphanages

Scale	Ketangguhan mental	control	comitmen	Challenge	Confidance
Grief	-0.164	-0.121	-0.204	-0.104	-0.133

## Discussions

This study aims to describe the level of mental toughness among orphanage adolescents who experience grief symptoms. The findings indicate that most adolescents fall within the normal grief category; however, a subgroup exhibits symptoms at the Syndromal Level Symptomatology and even meets the criteria for Prolonged Grief Disorder (Sugara et al., 2025). This distribution suggests that the grieving process among adolescents does not occur uniformly but is influenced by the intensity of loss, the quality of social support, and each individual's emotional condition (Haryanto & Amaliyah, 2025). In the context of orphanages, grief is often more complex, as adolescents may experience multiple forms of loss, such as the death of parents, separation from their nuclear family, or limited emotional attachment to caregivers (Falala et al., 2024). The accumulation of these losses has the potential to extend the recovery period and increase vulnerability to prolonged grief disorders (Anzeli et al., 2025). Previous literature consistently shows that adolescents living in alternative care settings are at a greater

risk of developing unresolved grief (Prigerson et al., 2009). Sochos and Aleem (2022) explain that the disruption of secure relationships with significant caregivers can lead to insecure attachment, which subsequently hinders adolescents' ability to process grief-related emotions adaptively. Similarly, Ibda (2023) notes that the lack of emotional support in daily life makes orphanage adolescents more susceptible to deep sadness, persistent longing, and difficulty accepting the reality of loss. These findings highlight that although the majority of adolescents experience grief within a normal range, the presence of groups exhibiting syndromal symptoms up to PGD underscores the need for more targeted psychological support.

The subsequent findings indicate that most participants fell within the moderate category of mental toughness. This suggests that although orphanage adolescents encounter various psychological pressures and challenging life experiences, they are still able to maintain a certain level of psychological resilience (Katkar et al., 2021). This result is important because it highlights the dual condition faced by adolescents in orphanage settings: on one hand, they experience emotional vulnerability due to loss, unstable caregiving, and limited family support; on the other hand, they demonstrate adaptive capacities that enable them to function effectively in difficult situations. These findings align with previous studies showing that adolescents raised in alternative care settings often develop resilience through exposure to multiple life challenges (Pinheiro et al., 2024; Hendriani, 2025). However, the lower scores found in the control and confidence dimensions indicate that emotional regulation and self-belief are the most vulnerable areas. This reinforces existing literature suggesting that adolescents who grow up without the support of their nuclear families are more prone to emotional instability, self-doubt, and difficulty making decisions under stressful conditions (Auliya & Eva, 2025). Conversely, the commitment and challenge dimensions, which fall within the moderate category, reveal promising resilience potential, particularly in their ability to complete tasks and view challenges as part of the learning process. These results are consistent with Clough and Strycharczyk's (2012) work, which states that these two dimensions often develop through demanding life experiences. In the context of orphanages, routines, structured rules, and assigned responsibilities may contribute to the development of commitment as well as academic and social resilience (Shofia & Nuranisa, 2025).

Andrean and Akmal (2019) highlight the importance of considering the role of the orphanage's social environment as a potential protective factor. The presence of caregivers, peers, and the internal orphanage community often provides social support that helps adolescents develop mental toughness. Consistent with the findings of Muliawiharto and Masykur (2020), social support serves as one of the primary predictors of resilience and emotional well-being among adolescents living in vulnerable conditions. This may also explain why most participants did not fall into the low category despite their complex life histories. In addition, the results of the gender comparison show that male adolescents had higher average mental toughness scores than females. This finding aligns with previous literature reporting that males tend to express psychological resilience through greater courage and a stronger perception of challenge (Munawaroh & Mashudi, 2018; Erlangga, 2025). Cultural factors may also contribute to this pattern. In the Indonesian context, gender norms often encourage males to display independence and emotional strength, whereas females tend to be more expressive about their vulnerabilities. These differences may result in lower scores for girls in aspects related to self-confidence and emotional control (Ratnasari & Suleman, 2017).

The analysis revealed that grief has a negative relationship with mental toughness among adolescents living in orphanages. Although the strength of the association was not high, the consistent negative pattern indicates that higher levels of grief are associated with reduced ability to manage psychological stress. This finding aligns with theories suggesting that grief can hinder emotional regulation, reduce concentration, and weaken adaptive responses to stressful situations (Eisma & Stroebe, 2021). Within the orphanage context, the complexity of loss including the death of parents, disrupted family relationships, and diminished emotional stability may heighten adolescents' vulnerability and hinder their capacity to process grief in a healthy manner (Chen et al., 2025). Thus, the negative association underscores the importance of emotional support and psychological interventions to help adolescents integrate experiences of loss more adaptively (Yustinus, 2025). When the discussion is extended to the dimensions of mental toughness, grief appears to influence multiple aspects, including control, commitment, challenge, and confidence. Adolescents experiencing grief tend to show decreased motivation, weakened emotional regulation, and reduced ability to view stressful situations as opportunities for growth. Prior literature also indicates that unresolved grief can affect self-perception and social relationships, thereby limiting psychological development during adolescence (Julianti & Laksmiwati, 2022). Although the influence of grief is not equally strong across all dimensions, the consistent negative trend demonstrates that grief remains an important factor shaping adolescents' psychological strength. These findings emphasize the need for comprehensive emotional and psychosocial support to help orphaned adolescents build more adaptive forms of resilience in the face of loss.

## Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for the field of guidance and counseling, particularly in relation to the development of services aimed at strengthening the mental toughness of adolescents living in orphanages. The fact that most participants fell within the moderate category of mental toughness indicates that, although they are not in a highly vulnerable condition, their psychological resilience remains at risk if appropriate interventions are not provided. This highlights the urgency of designing and implementing counseling strategies that specifically target improvements in emotional regulation, stress management, and self-confidence two areas identified as the weakest in this study. From a practical standpoint, these findings underscore the importance of equipping school counselors, orphanage caregivers, and mental health practitioners with the competencies needed to implement interventions that enhance resilience. Sugara et al. (2025) emphasize the role of cognitive-behavioral interventions, emotional regulation training, and character development programs in strengthening adolescents' psychological functioning. Additionally, Church et al. (2018) highlight that Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)-based interventions can be used to improve the control and confidence dimensions, which were found to be relatively low among some participants. Through strategies such as increased self-awareness, restructuring negative thoughts, reinforcing adaptive behaviors, and cultivating more positive response patterns, adolescents can be supported in facing psychological pressures more effectively (Stapleton et al., 2020).

## Conclusions

This study provides an overview of the level of mental toughness among adolescents living in orphanages. The findings indicate that although most adolescents fall within the moderate category of mental toughness, certain dimensions particularly control and confidence show lower scores compared to the others. This suggests that emotional regulation and self-confidence remain vulnerable areas for adolescents in alternative caregiving environments. The study is significant because it highlights the need for early interventions and support programs that focus on strengthening emotional regulation, enhancing self-belief, and developing adaptive skills. Although descriptive in nature and limited to the context of specific orphanages, this research contributes to the literature on mental toughness among adolescents in non-family care settings and reinforces the necessity for more effective and sustainable intervention strategies.

Overall, this study emphasizes that the mental toughness of adolescents living in orphanages is not evenly distributed across all dimensions, indicating the need for targeted psychological support to help them navigate developmental challenges more adaptively. These findings also open opportunities for future research to further explore the factors influencing mental toughness and to identify the most effective interventions within alternative caregiving contexts.

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