

Differences in the Impact of *Fatherlessness* Based on Developmental Age Stages: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRAK

Fatherless mengacu pada tidak adanya sosok ayah selama tahap perkembangan anak, baik secara fisik maupun psikologis. Tinjauan sistematis ini menganalisis 15 jurnal internasional untuk mengeksplorasi efek dari ayah tanpa ayah di berbagai periode perkembangan. Temuan ini menyoroti konsekuensi yang signifikan tergantung pada usia anak. Selama masa kanak-kanak, tidak adanya ayah dikaitkan dengan prestasi akademik yang lebih rendah dan peningkatan risiko terlibat dalam perilaku berandalan selama masa remaja dan awal dewasa. Pada masa remaja tanpa ayah sering berkontribusi pada kebingungan identitas, tantangan dalam interaksi sosial, dan ketidakpastian mengenai orientasi seksual. Ketika individu bertransisi ke masa dewasa, tidak adanya sosok ayah memengaruhi kemampuan mereka untuk menjalin hubungan yang sehat dengan lawan jenis dan meningkatkan kerentanan mereka terhadap masalah psikologis. Temuan ini menekankan pengaruh mendalam dari ketiadaan ayah pada berbagai aspek pertumbuhan dan perkembangan anak. Tinjauan ini menyoroti perlunya penelitian berkelanjutan untuk menyelidiki efek bernuansa dari ketiadaan ayah di berbagai tahap perkembangan. Studi semacam itu sangat penting untuk mengembangkan strategi dan intervensi yang ditargetkan yang bertujuan meminimalkan hasil buruk yang terkait dengan tidak adanya sosok ayah. Dengan mengatasi tantangan ini, upaya masa depan dapat mendukung anak-anak dan dewasa muda dengan lebih baik dalam menavigasi kompleksitas perjalanan perkembangan individu.

ABSTRACT

Fatherlessness refers to the absence of a father figure during a child's developmental stages, whether physically or psychologically. This systematic review analyzes 15 international journals to explore the effects of fatherlessness across various developmental periods. The findings highlight significant consequences depending on the child's age. During childhood, the absence of a father is linked to lower academic achievement and an increased risk of engaging in delinquent behavior during adolescence and early adulthood. In adolescence, fatherlessness often contributes to identity confusion, challenges in social interactions, and uncertainty regarding sexual orientation. As individuals transition into adulthood, the absence of a father figure impacts their ability to establish healthy relationships with the opposite sex and heightens their vulnerability to psychological issues. These findings emphasize the profound influence of fatherlessness on various aspects of a child's growth and development. The review highlights the need for continued research to delve into the nuanced effects of fatherlessness across different stages of development. Such studies are crucial for developing targeted strategies and interventions aimed at minimizing the adverse outcomes associated with the absence of a father figure. By addressing these challenges, future efforts can better

support children and young adults in navigating the complexities of their developmental journey

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of the father in the family has an important role both physically and psychologically. Indonesia is famous as a "fatherless country", Indonesia is the third most lost role of fathers in childcare (Kompas.com, 2023). This data results in instability in the family environment, which can affect the overall well-being of the child, The statement shows that children who have experienced the loss of a father tend to have a higher risk of developing behavioral problems, poor mental health, low academic achievement, and interpersonal relationship disorders. Based on research data researched by Anas et al (2024) the results show that there is a relationship between the role of fathers and juvenile delinquency.

Other studies also mention that the influence of father's absence in the process of educating children in the family can affect children's academics, juvenile delinquency, and even psychological. This statement is reinforced by the results of (Herbert, 2019) research which shows that the influence of father's absence in childhood and adulthood can have an impact on anxiety and depression in women. In addition, Nurmalasari et al (2024)) said that the influence of father's absence has significance on adolescent academic achievement. Meanwhile, the influence of father's absence on children can have an impact on sexual orientation(Le, 2019).

In addition, research conducted by Cristy & Soetikno 2023 showed that the absence of fathers also has an impact on individual self-resilience in both adolescents and adults. This study explains that in addition to resilience, there are other impacts, namely a high level of loneliness in children who do not have a father role. In another study that correlates *fatherlessness* with resilience, it corroborates the results of research that the absence of fathers in the role of educating children has the impact that individuals who get the role of fathers tend to have stable resilience for longer than individuals who do not have the presence of fathers(Cristy & Soetikno, 2023; Utami, 2020).

Losing a father figure in a child's life can have a significant impact on their resilience levels. Recent research shows that children who grow up without a father tend to have difficulty developing the resilience skills necessary to overcome life's challenges. They may have difficulty managing stress, coping with fear, and facing uncertainty due to a lack of emotional support and guidance from a father. The lack of a father figure can also affect the formation of a child's self-identity and their perception of their ability to overcome obstacles. Thus, the presence of a less active or absent father in the child's life can hinder the development of strong resilience that is essential for facing life's challenges (Cristy & Soetikno, 2023).

Support, especially for parents, can make individuals rise when experiencing adversity in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Therefore, the role of the father as the main figure in the family takes an important role in determining the success of the child in this phase. The role of

fathers in parenting patterns is important in shaping individuals. The influence of patriarchy in Indonesia shows that the involvement of fathers in childcare is relatively low when compared to the role of mother-to-child care (Fauzana & Pratama, 2023). The results of this upbringing show that low *self-esteem* and resilience in individuals (Cristy & Soetikno, 2023; Fauzana & Pratama, 2023). In the study of Bleidorn et al (2016) it was found that individual self-esteem levels tend to increase with age, both in adolescence and adulthood. In general, based on the results of the research conducted, it shows that the level of self-esteem in men tends to be higher than that of women around the world (Bleidorn et al., 2016). High *self-esteem* is often associated with better psychological well-being, including higher levels of life satisfaction and better mental well-being. However, low self-esteem can lead to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and difficulty in social interaction. Therefore, understanding the factors that affect self-esteem and ways to improve it can have significant implications in improving individual well-being, (Bleidorn et al., 2016).

At each age of individual development, stakeholders are needed to supervise, educate, and teach individuals to go through each phase of development completely so that individuals can carry out the next phase well. Individuals who go through the developmental phase without the presence of the Father can cause some impact on the side of their lives. Therefore, this systematic analysis of the review aims to examine several studies related to the impact of *fatherlessness* according to the age of the developmental phase.

2. METHOD

The initial stage of this systematic review process is carried out by planning a review, namely journal search, selection, quality assessment, and extraction. Then, it ends with reporting on each process. Planning a review on *systematic review* it uses the SPIDER formulation which is *Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type*. Based on this formulation, the research question was obtained, namely what are the impacts of *fatherless* based on developmental age. In the second stage, the researcher determines the search term to find articles that answer this research question. Then, the researcher makes a list of searches or search keywords that match the terms taken. In this study, the search keywords to be used are: *fatherless, father absence, and father hunger*. These three words are used as keywords in *database* searches on Research gate, Google Scholars, and Scopus.

The third stage is the selection process. All search results are entered into the Rayyan app for duplication checks, and so on. After checking duplication, the researcher sorted out the title and abstract that were in accordance with the research study. Articles that meet the research criteria are rechecked in their entirety. In *this systematic review*, a selection of 200 articles was carried out which found that there were only 15 articles that discussed *fatherless*. The article selection process can be seen in Figure 1. The flow of journal selection can be seen from first, the limitations in this systematic review are 1) the journal discusses the influence or relationship of *fatherlessness* on other variables. 2). The subject of the study is the developmental age from 0 years to late adulthood. 3). Journals used in English, 4). The type of research can be qualitative or quantitative, 5). The research was conducted in the last 10 years, namely 2014-2024.

After the selection is carried out, the journals that are suitable and enter the criteria will be included in the discussion and the journals that do not enter the criteria such as 1). Not discussing *fatherless*, 2). Not written in English, 3). Journals that do not describe the impact of *fatherless*, 4). Articles that are in the form of reviews, books, *literature reviews*, meta-analysis, or research whose methods are not clearly stated.

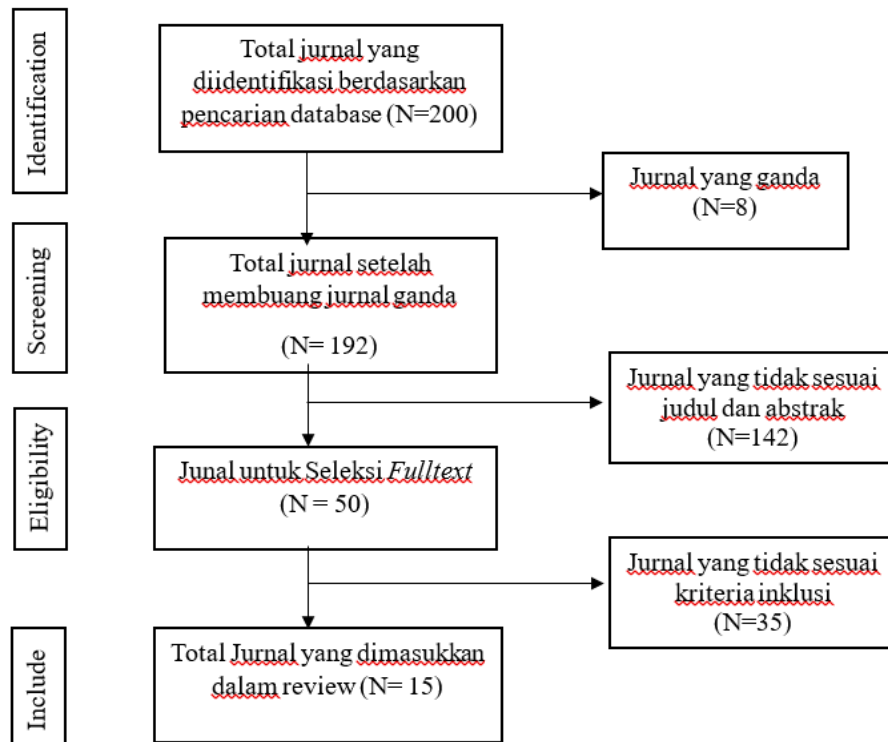


Figure 1. PRISMA Graphics for Journal Selection Flow

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fatherlessness occurs as a form of a father's irresponsibility to the role he has in the family. Fathers who do not think about the impact of absenteeism in roles for children can have a different impact on each child's growth and development. In general, fathers will consider that the most important role in the process of raising children is a mother. This thought arises because the mother is the one who gives birth to the child and the father is the breadwinner in the family. However, many studies say that the absence of the role of the father in the growth and development of children has various impacts from children to adulthood.

The absence of the role of the father in the learning and upbringing process of a child has various impacts on children's growth and development. The impact experienced can also be felt during the growth period and even have an impact on the future growth and development period. Some experts define fatherless, namely according to Ntoma & Kusmawati (2024) stating that fatherless is a father's attitude that has an impact on the role of fathers in the family, such as not having a presence or psychological responsibility for children in a family. Fatherless according to Hadi et al (2024) is the absence of the role of the father psychologically in the child's soul but is biologically or physically present in the family. Meanwhile, according to Arbiyana & Kholil (2024) fatherlessness is the role of fathers who are not present in the child's life, whether they are going to get divorced, die, or are not close in terms of relationships in the family. Based on research by Adewale (2013) related the impact of fatherlessness on IQ. The results of the study show that children who have low IQ are caused by one of them, namely the role of the father in the family environment. Furthermore, Cristy & Soetikno (2023) mentioned that fatherlessness also has an impact on children's cognitive and cognitive abilities. The definition presented by several experts has also mentioned the impact of fatherless indirectly. The following are some of the impacts of fatherlessness based on a systematic analysis of reviews based on developmental age from children to adults.

Table 1

| No | Researchers | Subject | Impact | Findings |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | (Remacetse,2023) | Early adulthood (20-25 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emosional negative • Identity crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals experience identity crises, negative emotions and do not have healthy relationships with other men. |
| 2 | (TenEyck et al, 2023) | Teenagers (14-18 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing a criminal act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of the role of Father at the age of 0 to 5 years can affect the occurrence of criminal acts. • Meanwhile, in the absence of the role of the father at the age of 14 to 18 years can give rise to criminal behavior in early adulthood. |
| 3 | (Cupin et al, 2022) | Teenagers (12-18 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study shows the impact of fatherlessness, namely depression in adolescence to early adulthood and risk factors for experiencing poor mental health. |
| 4 | (Hehman, 2019) | Teen-Adult (18-25 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who experience the psychological absence of the Father do not have full gender maturity |
| 5 | (Zhou, 2024) | Teenagers (14-18 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of loneliness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of the role of Father in adolescence can lead to loneliness |
| 6 | (Gaml, 2021) | Children (11 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early puberty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, both boys and girls, experience puberty early. |
| 7 | (Castetter ,2020) | Adult (21-30) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low self esteem • mental illness • toxic relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor academic performance, low self-esteem, tendency to experience mental illness, and toxic relationships with the opposite sex |
| 8 | (Sanders, 2022) | Adult (>18 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased satisfaction with the marriage |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 9 | (Douglas, 2023) | Adult (>24 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental illness • Toxic relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this study, they experienced mental illness and toxic relationships with the opposite sex |
| 10 | (Kinard, 2020) | Adult (>25 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High resilience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who experience the Dad's absence psychologically can succeed in life even with only support from the mother |
| 11 | (Herrel, 2020) | Children (6-11 years old) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem • Low academic • Rendah responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals experience low responsibility, low Self Esteem, poor ethics, low academic success, and low self-confidence |
| 12 | (Beckman, 2019) | Teenagers (12-17 years old) | Self-isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social conditions are inferior to those of individuals who have the presence of fathers |
| 13 | (Cross, 2021) | Adult (21-30) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low academics • Mental illness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this study, fatherlessness has an impact on low academics, difficulty in decision-making, and mental illness |
| 14 | (Freeks, 2022) | Children to Teens (10-16 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child: Low self-confidence • Adolescents: Social issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who experience fatherlessness tend to have no social interaction and low self-confidence |
| 15 | (Stockhols, 2019) | Early adulthood (21-25 years). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this study, fatherlessness has an impact on low emotional well-being, self-isolation, and low academics |

Table 1 shows that the type fatherless What happens to children is that the father is physically present but does not have psychological closeness to the child so he is hesitant to chat, behave, and even express romantic words. Paste from fatherless can be felt from children to adults. Based on the results of this systematic review, namely:

The absence of fathers in children's lives can have a significant impact on their development. Research by Gaml-Sørensen & Ernst (2021) shows that 11-year-olds can experience early puberty, both in boys and girls. In addition, Herrell (2020) found that children who do not have a father tend to have low self-esteem, poor academic achievement, and minimal level of responsibility. This impact continues into adolescence, where research by Freeks (2023) indicates that children who experience fatherlessness tend to feel less confident and experience social problems as they enter adolescence.

Entering the adolescent phase, the absence of the father's role further increases the risk of negative behavior. TenEyck et al (2023) noted that adolescents who experience a father's absence at the age of 0-5 years have the potential to be involved in criminal acts. This impact continues into adulthood, where Cupin (2022) observed that individuals without a father are at risk of depression from adolescence to early adulthood. In addition, Zhou et al (2024) found that adolescents aged 14-

18 years can experience significant loneliness, while Beckman et al (2019) pointed out a higher level of social isolation in adolescents who did not have a father present.

In the adult phase, the impact of father's absence continues and can affect an individual's mental health as well as interpersonal relationships. Research by Ramatsetse & Ross (2023) shows that early adult individuals (20-25 years old) often face identity crises and negative emotions. Castetter (2020) found that they are at risk of low self-esteem and toxic relationships. In addition, Douglas (2023) noted that adult individuals over 24 years old tend to experience mental illness and dissatisfaction in relationships. However, not all impacts are negative; Kinard (2020) emphasizes that despite experiencing the absence of the father, individuals can achieve high resilience with support from the mother.

In addition to the psychological and social impacts, the absence of a father figure also has an impact on the emotional development of children. Children who experience fatherlessness often show symptoms of anxiety and have difficulty controlling their emotions. They tend to be more sensitive to criticism and often feel incapable of meeting the expectations of others, both in the family and school environment. The father's inability to provide emotional support can exacerbate behavioral problems, such as aggressive behavior or an inability to manage conflict. This can also continue into adulthood, where individuals with fatherless backgrounds tend to have difficulty managing interpersonal relationships, both in the context of friendships, romantic relationships, and in the work environment.

The impact of fatherlessness at each age has a diversity of attitudes that arise in individuals. Based on the findings, it shows that in general, children tend to have low academics and low confidence if they experience the absence of the father's role in their lives. Then, in adolescence, fatherlessness tends to cause individuals to experience psychological disorders and even social problems such as low resilience, low self-esteem, and identity crisis. Meanwhile, in adulthood, fatherlessness tends to cause individuals to experience toxic relationships with the opposite sex. The difference in impact on each age of individual development shows that each individual has a phase of development according to their individual needs.

From these results, it can be concluded that each role is needed in each phase of individual development as stakeholders' which will help the growth and development process. If the role needed in each development is not fulfilled, the individual tends to experience a buildup of problems in each phase so that there are problems in the next phase. A patriarchal culture that emphasizes the role of the father only as a breadwinner cannot be applied because it has a negative impact on the psychological development and behavior of the individual. Some studies also mention that behaviors that tend to appear if individuals experience fatherless namely criminal acts or behaviors that are contrary to social norms. Therefore, the role of the father becomes very important in the process of individual development from children to adults.

4. CONCLUSION

Phenomenon fatherless occurs in parents who do not Aware on the growth and development of children, not having time, even due to divorce, and so on. Fatherless is the attitude of the father who does not bring warmth to the child and the father has a little role in the child's growth and development process. Indirectly, Dad is only the breadwinner in the family. Without realizing it, the absence of the father has an impact on individual development both at that time and in the future. Based on the results of the systematic review, it shows that individuals who experience fatherless tend to have social, academic, and romantic problems. psychic, and even criminal. The findings in this systematic review can make it easier to determine the impact of fatherless In accordance with the age of development so that this meeting can be a consideration for parents in behaving towards their children. The results of this systematic review can also be a reference for further research and can also be a reference for in-depth research because in every research it is

inseparable from shortcomings, further review and development will continue to be carried out as an effort to improve.

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