Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

2018

The Lived Experience of Daughters Who Have Absent Fathers: A Phenomenological Study

Sibhon Jolette Brown
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Part of the Clinical Psychology Commons, and the Counseling Psychology Commons

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sibhon Brown

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Alethea Baker, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Timothy Lionetti, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Brent Robbins, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

The Lived Experience of Daughters Who Have Absent Fathers:

A Phenomenological Study

By

Sibhon Brown

MEd, Virginia State University, 2005

BA, Virginia Union University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

May 2018

Abstract

The problem that this study focused on was the difficulties and challenges experienced by daughters who had absent fathers. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. The sample consisted of 20 daughters who grew up with absent fathers. Data were collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using 5 phases of Hycner's (1999) phenomenological research. Results indicated that participants' lived experiences of home life were characterized by financial and emotional hardships resulting from the loss of a father's earnings and care. The meanings or lessons that participants derived from having absent fathers included the importance of being independent, of appreciating the people who remained with them, and of making a better life for their own children, either by choosing a mate who would be a committed father or by helping their children to come to terms with the man's absence. Participants reported that the absence of their fathers shaped their decision-making patterns in romantic relationships, either by normalizing exploitative behavior in men (e.g., deception, abuse, or abandonment), or by predisposing them to distrust men. Participants were also affected in their decision-making patterns by the loss of a male perspective and a father's guidance. These results are of significance because by gaining understanding of the experiences of daughters with absent fathers, healthcare professionals may provide appropriate assistance to help these women cope better with their difficulties and struggles.

The Lived Experience of Daughters Who Have Absent Fathers:

A Phenomenological Study

by

Sibhon Brown

MEd, Virginia State University, 2005

BA, Virginia Union University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

May 2018

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The topic of the study was the lived experiences of daughters who have absent fathers. Young girls who grew up without a stable paternal presence are more likely to experience a variety of negative outcomes such as low self-esteem, psychological disturbances, difficulty with romantic relations, living in poverty, sexual risk taking, dropping out of school, and early pregnancy (Mendle et al., 2009; Pruett, Cowan, Cowan, & Pruett, 2009). Other research has suggested that the relationship between father absence and child outcomes may be more complex, with Kalil et al. (2014) noting that positive family structures can offset the negative effects of paternal absenteeism.

Further research on daughters with absent fathers may provide insights regarding the lived experiences of adult women who grew up without paternal involvement, the decision-making processes of daughters who have absent fathers, and their perceptions of the influence of father absenteeism on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions. Perceptions of the father-child relationship are important because they can impact the quality of the parent-child relationship as well as relations between them (Krampe & Newton, 2012). The results of this study can lead to positive social change by helping health care professionals achieve improved insights about the difficulties and struggles of adult daughters with absent fathers at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes.

This chapter includes a discussion of the key components of the current study. The chapter will include the following topics: (a) background, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose of the study, (d) research questions, (e) theoretical framework, (f) nature of the study, (g)

definitions, (h) assumptions, (i) scope and delimitations, (j) limitations, and (k) significance of the study. The chapter ends with a summary.

Background

Researchers have explored the importance of the mother-child relationship, especially during the early years of a child; however, there has been a shift in focus towards the less-discussed but vital role of fathers in shaping the development of children (Choo & Shek, 2013; Krampe & Newton, 2012; Miles-McLean, 2014; Najam & Kausar, 2012; Tastan, 2013). Positive father involvement is associated with a variety of behaviors in children, including less sexual activity, less drunken behavior, lower susceptibility to peer pressure, and more healthy eating attitudes (Choo & Shek, 2013; Miles-McLean, 2014). Tastan (2013) found that a weak father-child relationship is positively associated with both constructive and destructive styles of conflict resolution. Other researchers found that paternal rejection and hostility are significantly positively related to higher levels of behavioral problems and depressive symptoms in adolescents (Najam & Kausar, 2012).

The father-daughter relationship could play an important role in various aspects or stages of a woman's life (Baggett, Shaffer, & Muetzelfeld, 2015; Haaza, Kneavela, & Browning, 2014). Pruett et al. (2009) found those women who have contact with their father's demonstrated better academic performance and social and emotional functioning. The daughters' perceptions of their fathers are impacted by the reason for their absence, as well as paternal emotional affection (Krampe & Newton, 2012). If the absence was due to death, perceptions of the father were positive; if the absence was due to divorce or parent separation, participants reported less favorable perceptions of their father (Krampe & Newton, 2012).

Father absence is associated with various outcomes in women's life trajectories, including education, marriage, and career-related decisions (Baggett et al., 2015; DeBell, 2008; Pruett et al., 2009). Low-quality paternal relationships are associated with decreased marital intimacy, satisfaction, and increased insecurity (Baggett et al., 2015; Haaza et al., 2014), and father absence is associated with earlier age of marriage and child rearing (Sheppard, Snopkowski, & Sear, 2014). DeBell (2008) found that income levels were lower for women whose fathers were absent during childhood, and linked parental financial support for single mothers to children's educational performance.

The gaps in the literature that this study addressed were the lived experiences of adult women who grew up without paternal involvement, the decision-making processes of daughters who had absent fathers, and their perceptions of the influence of father absenteeism on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions (Baggett et al., 2015; Bryan, 2014; DeBell, 2008; Pruett et al., 2009). While studies have contributed to the understanding of how father absence impacts the lives of daughters (Baggett et al., 2015; DeBell, 2008; Pruett et al., 2009), more studies are needed in order to have a better understanding of their experiences at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. Jackson (2010) explored one-way communication patterns, but did not articulate how lived experiences and decision-making patterns, affected by the absence of the father, influence partner communication. Jackson (2010) recommended a qualitative study that explores the communication and decision-making patterns of daughters with absent fathers. Bryan (2014) focused on the lives of the absent fathers, and did not explain how these reconnections fulfilled the daughters' needs for fathers. Bryan (2014) recommended that future studies explore the qualitative descriptions of the daughters' identities as they lived without the presence of their fathers.

Given the research evidence on the negative impact of absence of fathers on daughters (Alleyne-Green, Grinnell-Davis, Clark, & Cryer-Coupet, 2015; Baggett et al., 2015; Krampe & Newton, 2013), this study contributed to a better understanding of the lived experiences of adult women who grew up without paternal involvement, the decision-making processes of daughters who have absent fathers, and their perceptions of the influence of father absenteeism on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions. The study also contributed to the understanding of these daughters' difficulties and struggles in various aspects of their lives, both as young children and as adults.

Problem Statement

As the rate of divorce in the United States increases, the frequency of children with absent fathers has expanded (Glass & Levchak, 2014). The consequences of divorce have detrimental effects on children's lives, particularly for daughters, when the children perceive abandonment (Lu et al., 2010). Researchers have shown that girls and young women without stable father figures were more likely to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior, have low self-esteem, drop out of school, experience early pregnancy and poverty, have failed marriages, and demonstrate psychological issues (Mendle et al., 2009; Pruett et al., 2009). Other studies revealed that daughters with absentee fathers experienced psychological effects such as insecurities, difficulty establishing intimate relationships with the opposite sex, development of attention-seeking behavior, and negative perceptions of men and relationships (Grimm-Wassil, 1994; Krohn & Bogan, 2001). While previous studies have explained the social and psychological dilemmas of daughters with absent father figures, minimal research has examined the lived experiences of these women in the context of their life decisions (Bryan, 2014; Jackson, 2010).

The specific problem is that while the United States' average annual divorce rate is declining from six to four couples per 1,000, the effects on women who have had absent father figures are significant (Jackson, 2010). While the effects of absent fathers on children, particularly on daughters, are known, researchers have not phenomenologically explored children's life decisions in the context of their experiences and perceptions (Bryan, 2014). Studies have revealed the influence of father absence on women's communication styles and their approaches to maintaining romantic relationships (Jackson, 2010), the relationship of the father's absence to the adulthood lives of the daughters (DeBell, 2008), the psychosocial and cognitive effects of fathers' involvement in the lives of children (Lu et al., 2010; Mendle et al., 2009; Pruett et al., 2009), and the decision-making patterns of women raised in homes with absentee fathers (East, Jackson, & O'Brien, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. The main objective of this study was to explore how absent fathers affect the overall functioning of daughters in various aspects of their lives. I captured the lived experience of daughters with absent fathers using semi-structured interviews.

Research Questions

Based on the problem identified and the purpose that was formulated, the research questions of the study were the following:

1. What are the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods?

2. What are the essential meanings of these experiences to the daughters' lives as children and as adults?

3. How do the life struggles of daughters with absent fathers shape their life decision-making patterns?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Vygotsky's social development theory, Bandura's social learning theory, paternal investment theory (Vygotsky, 1998), and Surrey's self-in-relation theory (1985). Each of these theories contributed to the understanding of the role of fathers in the lives of their daughters (Ellis, 2004; Kearsley, 2011). This section will briefly discuss the main principles and assertions of each theory, including the theories' appropriateness to the theoretical framework.

Social development theory and social learning theory address social interaction and development of cognition, as well as the significance of observing and patterning behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions to others (Kearsley, 2011). Social development theory argues that social interaction contributes to cognitive development; in relation to father absence, this theory helped me to identify how having no father interaction contributes to a daughter's development. Social learning theory argues that people learn from one another by observing, imitating, and modeling, which helped me to identify the effects of growing up without a father in a single-parent home on a daughter's development. Both the social development and social learning theories are appropriate components of the theoretical framework; these theories recognize the important role of fathers in possibly influencing the development of daughters, particularly during the early years.

Paternal investment theory explains that low paternal investment, such as father absence, hastens children's introduction to adolescence and sexual initiation. This exposes them to weak pair bonds that usually manifest as romantic ideals and result in unfavorable relationships marked by commitment issues and sexual behavior outside of committed relationships (Ellis, 2004). The parental investment theory is an appropriate and relevant component of the theoretical framework to frame the possible negative effects of absence of fathers in different aspects of their daughters' lives.

Finally, the self-in-relation theory (Surrey, 1985) focuses on how the relationship between women and their sense of self is central to healthy psychological development. Researchers use this approach in psychotherapy and healing emotional wounds. The self-in-relation theory is appropriate and relevant component of the theoretical framework to frame the father-daughter relationship as influential in the psychological development of women.

Nature of the Study

The current research study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research does not include a specific set of analyses or variables, but rather provides an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of a group of individuals regarding a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative research approach was appropriate because the methodological principles of collecting in-depth data, subjectivity, and constructivism aligned with the purpose of the study (i.e., to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes). As noted by Marshall and Rossman (2014), qualitative researchers utilize semi-structured interviews as an appropriate way to explore the subjective lived experiences of a phenomenon.

In the current study, I explored the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers, using a phenomenological research design. The selection of phenomenological research design was appropriate because of the emphasis on exploring the lived experiences of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers use phenomenological research when the subjective perceptions and experiences of a group of people are central to the understanding of a specific phenomenon.

I conducted interviews to collect first-person perspectives of the experiences of daughters with absent fathers. I used purposeful and snowball sampling techniques to identify and recruit 20 daughters with absent fathers (Yin, 2012). I conducted interviews with adult daughters who grew up with absent fathers. Interview transcripts of the participants, which contained the audio-recorded files of the interviews, were analyzed using the five phases that Hycner (1999) developed to analyze phenomenological research. The five stages of the phenomenological data analysis involve: (a) bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of meaning, (c) clustering of data into themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) generating composite descriptions.

Definitions

The following key concepts and terms were central to the basis of the current study.

Absent fathers. Fathers who are absent are defined as lacking in involvement in their children's lives as a result of a divorce (Baggett et al., 2015; DeBell, 2008; Pruett et al., 2009). Daughters with fathers who were absent due to death or incarceration were excluded from the study.

Decision-making. Decision-making refers to the processes involved in assessing a course of action based on personal analysis (McGovern, Alexopoulos, Yuen, Morimoto, & Gunning-Dixon, 2014).

Father-daughter relationship. Father-daughter relationship pertains to the quality of the relationship based on the perceptions of the adult children (Gallarin & Alonso-Arbiol, 2012).

Lived experience. Lived experience refers to the subjective perceptions of a group of people involving a unique and complex phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Assumptions

I first assumed that the participants would be honest and detailed with their responses during the interview. Because the topic of father absenteeism may be sensitive for some participants, I strove to develop a safe and empathetic environment during the interview to make the participants more likely to share their inner feelings and thoughts. I also emphasized to the participants that all data would remain confidential and could not be traced to their real identities.

The second assumption of the study was that semi-structured interviews would be sufficient in capturing the lived experience of the participants. I expected that the semi-structured interviews would produce rich and detailed responses as a result of asking several open-ended questions relevant to the topic of daughters who have absent fathers. I asked follow-up questions to further expound on the participants' initial responses.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was delimited to adult daughters of absent fathers as a result of the parents' divorce. In this study, father absenteeism excluded fathers who were absent as a result of death or incarceration. These situations were excluded because they did not represent the core focus of the study, which may be different from the experiences of daughters who lost their father to death or became estranged as a result of incarceration.

This study was also delimited to collecting semi-structured interview data. I expected the use of semi-structured interviews to produce rich data that can provide relevant understanding of

the participants' lived experiences. I believed that semi-structured interviews would be adequate to fulfill the purpose of the study.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study was that the results may not be transferable to all contexts that involve daughters with absent fathers. The results may not be transferable to the experiences of daughters of absent fathers as a result of death or incarceration. The lack of generalizability is common in qualitative research, but the extent of details that can be uncovered through interviews compensate for this limitation (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

The second limitation pertained to the dependability of the study in terms of the objectivity of the results. My professional background may have inadvertently influenced the data collection and data analysis of the study. Through the process of reflexivity, I detailed my professional background and personal opinions about the topic to account for possible conflict that may arise during the analysis. I also detailed my personal experiences with growing up with an absent father. I conducted member checking by asking participants to review the preliminary results to enhance the credibility of the findings.

Significance

This phenomenological study was distinctive because it focused on the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers, which may be the basis of engagement in social behaviors that affect them socially and economically. Most studies about father absence are centered on daughters' psychosocial effects, cognitive development, character development, and academic difficulties (Griffin, 1998; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Wilson & Prior, 2011). The results of this study provided insights about how women with absent fathers function in terms of their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions. The investigation of this process, in light of the lived

experiences of daughters with absent father figures, provided phenomenological information concerning the meaning of these women's feelings towards and perceptions of life, which are essential in explaining their social behaviors.

The information from this study can lead to positive social change in a number of ways. By gaining understanding of the experiences of daughters with absent fathers, healthcare professionals may provide appropriate assistance to help these women cope better with their difficulties and struggles. The results of this study would help these daughters with absent fathers have a healthy sense of self-esteem and attain psychological well-being, which may help them avoid early pregnancies, unhealthy and unstable relationships, and the development of negative, attention-seeking behavior.

Summary

The problem that this study focused on was the difficulties and challenges experienced by daughters with absent fathers. The gaps in the literature that I addressed in the study were the lived experiences of adult women who grew up without paternal involvement, the decision-making processes of daughters who have absent fathers, and their perceptions of the influence of father absenteeism on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions (Baggett et al., 2015; Bryan, 2014; DeBell, 2008; Pruett et al., 2009). The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Vygotsky's social development theory, Bandura's social learning theory, paternal investment theory (Vygotsky, 1998), and Surrey's self-in-relation theory (1985). The results of this study provided insights concerning the lived experience of women with an absent father.

      The next chapter presents the literature review conducted to further illuminate the research problem. In addition to an expanded discussion of the theoretical framework, the literature review will include a general positive and negative child outcomes relating to father engagement. The literature review focused on the specific area of the influence of father absence in terms of psychological, academic, social, and sexual functioning and the daughters' decision-making involving marriage, career, lifestyle, and other aspects of their lives. The literature review concludes with a discussion of the research gaps, which serve as the rationale for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As the frequency of divorce has increased in the United States (Glass & Levchak, 2014), it has become common for children to be raised without paternal involvement (Lu et al., 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that females growing up without a stable paternal presence are more likely to experience a variety of negative impacts, including: low self-esteem, psychological disturbances, difficulty with romantic relations, living in poverty, sexual risk taking, dropping out of school, and early pregnancy, among others (Mendle et al., 2009; Pruett et al., 2009).

The purpose of this study was to facilitate the in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with an absent father. Although many previous studies have expanded the knowledge regarding psychological and social difficulties of females with absentee fathers (Craven et al., 2012; East et al., 2006; Jackson, 2010; Lu et al., 2010; Perkins, 2001), little research is available investigating the lived experiences of women who grew up with absent fathers, as well as their perceptions of the influence of growing up without a father on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions (DeBell, 2008; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012).

Literature Search Strategy

I utilized the following search terms: *absent father, father-daughter relationship, paternal influence on child/daughter career, paternal influence on life decisions, impact on daughter*, as well as *father daughter*. I entered these search terms into databases such as *Sage Premier, EBSCO Host, Taylor & Francis Group*, Google Scholar, and *Science Direct PsycArticles*.

This literature review begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework, followed by the general positive and negative child outcomes related to father engagement. I will then discuss the impacts resulting from father disengagement, including: psychological, academic, social, and sexual risk taking, among others. The literature review then focuses on the specific area of research of focus in this study, which is an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of women who grew up with an absent father figure. Since most previous research has focused on the impacts of father absence throughout childhood, there is a lack of research exploring the lived experiences of adult women to provide information about decisions made in marriage, career, and lifestyles, and whether father absence played a role. The literature review concludes with a discussion of the gaps in the research and how this study helped to fill these gaps regarding the lived experiences of adult women who had grown up without paternal involvement, and their perceptions of the influence of father absenteeism on their careers, romantic lives, and other life decisions (DeBell, 2008; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012).

Theoretical Foundation

In order to better understand the lived experiences of women who grew up with absent fathers, I utilized the following theories: Vygotsky's social development theory (1978) and Bandura's social learning theory (1977). First, it is important to note that there are some similarities between social development and social learning theories. Both theories focus on how the process of social interaction impacts cognitive development, as well as the role of observation in emotional reactions, behaviors, and attitudes towards others (Kearsley, 2011). There are also some important differences between these two theories: while social development theory focuses on the cultural and social aspects of learning, social learning theory focuses on

rewards and sanctions for behavior, a more behavioral approach to analysis. I will discuss each of these theories that will guide the analysis of this research in turn.

Social development theory (SDT; Vygotsky, 1978) is a cognitive framework under which social interaction takes place before development. In this model, cognition is achieved after social interactions and socialization, and it is most effective with "more knowledgeable others." According to Vygotsky (1978), "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological)" (p. 57). Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory is widely taught in psychology classes as a well-respected theory. According to this theory, social learning is viewed as occurring before development. Social development theory is a socio-cultural theory of learning; within SDT, individual development can only be understood within the cultural and social context in which it takes place. A combination of learning and social interaction work together to produce higher cognitive processes, which would not be possible without the necessary social processes involved in learning.

Vygotsky (1978) established "the zone of proximal development," which refers to the difference between a student's current developmental level and his or her potential level of development that could be achieved through social interaction with others (particularly the more knowledgeable others). It is through "scaffolding" that the more knowledgeable others are able to work with the student to advance in the zone of proximate development to a student's potential (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding includes the close guidance of a teacher with an individual student (e.g., working on a homework problem together) whereby the teacher opens a dialogue about the problem and how to solve it; the teacher informs, explains, corrects, inquires, and empowers the child to explain how the problem was solved (Vygotsky, 1978). Social

development theory provides theoretical support for approaches to learning, including interaction between a student and mentor, rather than the traditional lecture model of teaching.

Social learning theory, a cognitive-behavioral framework, established the importance of intrinsic reinforcement and observational learning on behaviors, through modeling and imitation of behaviors, emotional responses, and attitudes of others (Bandura, 1977; Brauer, 2012; Chavis, 2012). In Bandura's (1977) well-known Bobo doll experiment, children exhibited more aggressive behavior towards a Bobo doll if they had first observed an adult acting aggressively toward the doll. Previously, research on learning had focused more on behavioral science (e.g., rewards and punishments for behavior) than on modeling (imitation of behavior). This focus on observation and imitation on learning makes social learning theory useful in explaining how having an absent father impacts females' life decisions. Social learning theory has been applied to a wide variety of topics, including drug use (Ford, 2014), police shootings of unarmed individuals (Maskaly & Donner, 2015), and business applications (Kauppenin & Juho, 2012).

Social learning theory stresses the importance of observational learning, as well as reciprocal interactions between cognitive, environmental, and behavioral influences in the process of social learning (Bandura, 1973). The following four processes are involved in observational learning: (a) attention, (b) retention, (c) motor reproduction, and (d) motivation (Bandura, 1973). Different components of observed/modeled events differentially impact attention process and include the following: the complexity, distinctiveness, prevalence, functional value, and affective valence of observed events; and the sensory capacities, past reinforcement, arousal level, and perceptual set of observer characteristics. Retention, cognitive organization, symbolic coding, symbolic rehearsal, and motor rehearsal all contribute to the retention of a learning moment. Regarding motor reproduction, not only do physical capabilities

matter, but so does the accuracy of feedback received and self-observation. Finally, motivation, self-reinforcement, external motivation, and vicarious motivation all contribute to the overall level of motivation. In the past, social learning theory has been applied to the literature on aggression, psychological disorders, and behavior modification.

Social learning theory together and social development theory helped to provide an understanding of the lived experiences, behavioral patterns, and attitudes of women whose fathers were absent while growing up. It follows, then, a lack of sufficient interaction with more knowledgeable others (e.g., a father figure) could be associated with more difficult lived experiences and life outcomes compared to children who grew up with both parents present.

Self-in-relation theory posits that an individual's sense of self is vital to healthy social and emotional development (Surrey, 1985). Surrey wrote that the development of a self-construct is different between men and women. Under this theory, males' individual development relies upon successful childhood separation from the mother, adolescent separation from the family, and adulthood separation from teachers and mentors. This results in a focus on independence-self-actualization, self-reliance, and autonomy. However, women experience this development differently. Women develop their identities through their ability to "make and then to maintain affiliation and relationships" (Miller, 1976 as cited in Surrey, 1985, p. 2). That is, women define their self through important connections with others. This results in females' greater capacity for emotional flexibility, emotional closeness, and relatedness. However, this may mean that if a relationship (i.e., father-daughter) is not present, it may lead to negative consequences within women's self-development. This provides a lens through which I viewed father absenteeism and its effects.

Ellis (2004) discussed paternal investment theory, including its focus on the association between paternal un-involvement and sexual participation. Having an absent father also normalizes weak relationships, manifested as romantic ideals, and results in more negative relationships, including participation in adultery (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, 2012; Surrey, 1985). Social learning theory and social development theory explain children's social development and learning, as well as how children relate to the world through social interaction. These theories help to explain how an absence of positive social interaction and influence from the father leaves children worse off than those who have regular social interaction with their fathers; as a part of this explanation, social development can be hindered if a child's father is uninvolved.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts</h3>

Much of the past research on the influence of fathers on their daughters' lives has focused on tangible factors such as psychological, social, and sexual development, and used surveys and quantitative analysis. This has provided great information for comparison purposes, but not for understanding of lived experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes associated with father absenteeism, which is the gap that I designed the current study to help fill. Scholars have pointed to a need for more in-depth qualitative research focusing on experiences, decisions, and attributes of females that grew up without a father figure (DeBell, 2008). Research should also explore the paternal influences on daughter behavior (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012), particularly in adult life, as most research has focused on father absenteeism during childhood. The current study involved in-person interviews with women who grew up with absent fathers.

The Importance of Father Engagement

This section will describe various ways a father's involvement provides a strong foundation for a child. The next section will outline how this foundation—or lack thereof—

relates to the research questions. Specifically, this section will focus on general paternal influences on child development, as well as perceptions of the role of the father and how this impacts a father's decision of whether and to what extent to be involved with his children. Examples of topics that will be mentioned in the following two sections regarding paternal involvement include the following: father perceptions of the parenting role (Bryan, 2014), transitions and family structure (Kalil et al., 2014; Lee & McLanahan, 2015; Ryan et al., 2015), instability, transitions, income level, the quality of father involvement with children (Johnson, 2013), societal expectations (including gender differences in parental communication), and the development of certain traits associated with either positive or negative outcomes in children (Dedonno & Fagan, 2013)..

Paternal disengagement. Although research on parental influences has historically focused on the mother-child relationship, researchers have placed growing importance on the father-child relationship, particularly the father-daughter relationship. In this section, I expand on insights from the literature on the impact of physically absent fathers (e.g. military, incarceration, etc.), as well as emotionally absent fathers on the parent-child relationship and child outcomes. In an analysis of father visitations from 1949-1998 (n=808) in the Netherlands, Westphal et al. (2014) noted an increase in father involvement, noting that the frequency of both types of child-father visitation increased. However, children raised without involved father figures remain a concern due to the associated negative outcomes.

Previous research has explored influences on father engagement with their children. First, fathers' perceptions of the provider role can influence their involvement. In a study of father perceptions of their parenting roles in a low-income setting, Bryan (2014) found that fathers perceived their parenting role (i.e., the provider role) as downplaying the importance of social

and emotional aspects of being a father, which they reported to be an influence in the disengagement of their children. In a qualitative study of 18 high-risk Latino teenagers exploring perceptions of their nonresident fathers, Lopez et al. (2012) found that 17 out of 18 of the participants reported feeling hostile and indifferent toward their fathers; participants also reported having trouble understanding why their fathers were uninvolved, and yearned to be with their fathers. Lopez et al. (2012) also expanded upon the factors that shape these perceptions, including father behavior, memories from childhood, and mother perceptions; these perceptions influenced how participants interacted with their fathers. In a related mixed-methods study of 1,372 participants (fathers and their daughters), Xu and O'Brien (2014) explored fathering behaviors in China. The researchers found that daughters feel close to their fathers, although they favored their mothers, and revealed the ways in which fathers negotiated their modern and traditional roles as fathers. This research revealed that the interaction between traditional and modern societal views of the role of the father produce the level of father involvement (Xu & O'Brien, 2014), and that father perceptions of the level of social and emotional support provided for his children (Bryan, 2014) were important to the level of involvement of the father in the father-child relationship.

Marital conflict and family structure. Not only do paternal perceptions of parenting roles influence the father-child relationship, but so does marital conflict. Gil (2014) found that cohesive parenting and geographical distance were important influences on the frequency of father-child interaction, as well as child adjustment. Gil also found that when fathers lived closer to their children, behavioral problems decreased and the child exhibited more positive social behavior compared to children with fathers who lived further away. This research demonstrated that paternal perceptions of the parenting role, as well as geographic distance and the nature of

the mother and father's co-parenting relationship, impact the father-child relationship. The nature of the co-parenting relationship, as well as the quality of marital relations, are both important factors to the parent-child relationship.

The literature also enumerated the impacts of marital conflict and marital satisfaction on the father-child relationship. In a survey-based study of 122 participants (mothers and fathers with a young child) that examined the relationship between the marital quality and the quality of the parent-child relationship, Holland and McElwain (2013) found that marital quality was related to the quality of the father-child relationship. Holland and McElwain also suggested that positive marital quality is associated with support and positive co-parenting. Werneck et al. (2014) found that although marital conflict was unimportant for the mother-child relationship, it was associated with the father-child relationship. This study also found that the child's personality was associated with the parent-child relationship, although the parent personality was not (Werneck et al., 2014). Given that the literature has established a close connection of the father-child relationship to marital turmoil, it makes sense that the father-child relationship is also more impacted by parental hostility.

Fathers' struggles with substance abuse problems can also have a negative impact on paternal involvement. Soderstrom and Skarderkud (2013) conducted research with the purpose of exploring perceptions of fatherhood in men with substance use disorders, which is one reason for father absence. In a qualitative study using interpretative phenomenological analysis of eight participants in a focus group, Soderstrom and Skarderkud separated the testimonies into three father types for analysis (i.e., the Good Father, the Invisible Father, and the Bad Father), and found that gender expectations, marital conflict, struggles with substance abuse, and "professional practices related to child protection issues" all impact paternal involvement in their

child's lives. Other than marital relations and substance abuse issues, previous research has also shown that the mothers, as well as her perceptions of the father-child relationship, are associated with paternal involvement.

Historically, research has focused on the importance on the mother-child relationship, given traditional gender roles and the biological closeness of a mother to her children. However, there has been a shift in focus towards the less-discussed but vital role of the father in shaping the development and outcomes of children. Previous research has established that the mother plays an important role in the father-child relationship, since factors like parental relations, marital quality, and mother perceptions of the father-child relationship are related to father positive involvement with the child. In a longitudinal study of 210 families that examined parent hostility and parent-child relationships, Newland et al. (2015) found that the father-child relationship is more impacted by parental hostility, although the father-daughter relationship was less impacted, especially in early childhood. Exploring factors that impact parent perceptions of marital quality, Galovan et al. (2014) found that participants perceived better marital relations when satisfied with parental responsibilities, which was when husbands were reported to share a greater amount of household responsibilities. Galovan et al. also found that the mother's perceptions of the quality of the father-child relationship had a strong effect on the perceived marital quality for both parents. This showed that marital conflict impacts both marital satisfaction and the father-child relationship, with the father-child relationship also impacting marital satisfaction (Galovan et al., 2014; Werneck et al., 2014). Interestingly, marital conflict did not impact the mother-child relationship, which could relate to the greater likelihood for mothers in the United States to gain child custody in the event of a break-up.

Other than the influence of marital relations on the parent-child relationship, previous research has also established that the type of family structure transition can have an impact on child well-being; for example, the transition from co-parenting to the presence of a stepfather, or conversely, the transition from living in a single-parent family to the presence of a step-parent, could have different impacts on child development. Lee and McLanahan (2015) conducted research with the purpose of exploring the impact of family instability on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being and development of affected children. In a longitudinal study using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Lee and McLanahan found that although family instability has an impact on child development, the relationship is more complex in that it is dependent on the population examined, the type of change, and the outcome. Lee and McLanahan (2015) also found that the transition to a single-parent family from a two-parent family negatively impacts children's development; additionally, unstable family structures have a more negative impact on the social and emotional development of children than on their cognitive development. This research also noted racial differences, with family structure transitions from two-parent to single-parent families more difficult for white children, and transitions from a single-parent family into one with two parents being more difficult for Hispanic children (Lee & McLanahan, 2015). Additionally, Lee and McLanahan suggested ideas for future research, including further attention on differences within the population (e.g. racial differences), as well as the type of family structure transition. The knowledge that the type of family structure is relevant for child outcome, as well as the importance of transitions, enables a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the impact of father involvement on child development.

Family structure and transitions. Other research has suggested that the relationship between father absence and child outcomes may be more complex. Kalil et al. (2014) conducted research with the purpose of exploring the role of parental child investment in children across six family structures (married biological parents, biological parents living together, stepfather with mother, mother and her live-in boyfriend, multigenerational, and single-mother family structures). In a study using data derived from the 1996 Panel Study of Income Dynamics' Child Development Supplement, Kalil et al. (2014) measured the amount of time spent with children across multiple caregivers, including non-related ones, and found that the amount of time invested in the children in stepfather families and multigenerational ones were "comparable" to the amount of time invested in both married and non-married cohabiting biological parent families. Kalil et al. explained that the difference is due to the amount of time invested in children of multigenerational and stepfather families by the child's non-resident biological fathers and grandparents. Kalil et al. also noted that the amount of time invested in children by resident and non-resident un-related father figures is not usually significant. The greatest amount of time investment was reported to be in the biological co-habiting family type, since the amount of time investment, as well as shared parenting, was higher when biological parents lived together. When compared to families with parents living together, children in stepfather, single-mother, and multigenerational families received less time investment from their biological fathers; this also suggests the importance of shared parenting (i.e., co-parenting; Kalil et al., 2014). This research revealed that the type of family structure that a child transitions into matters if the father becomes less involved.

The impact of family transitions and changes in the family structure impact child behaviors. Ryan et al. (2015) conducted research with the purpose of investigating the impact of

the change of family structure on child well-being and behavior. In a survey-based study of 3,936 participants from U.S. families and using data from the Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Ryan et al. compared data of family structures in this population separated by household income, and found that the transition of family structure from co-habiting biological parents to a single-parent household, especially early on in the child's life, was associated with child behavior problems (when compared with biological separations later in life). Ryan et al. also found that children from high-income families who move into a stepfamily are likely to improve their behaviors. This research established that socio-economic status might serve as a protective factor, moderating the impact of family transition on children's well-being and behaviors. The authors suggested that future research should pay attention to socio-economic status difference as one influential variable in an analysis of father absence, as reflected (Ryan et al., 2015).

The impact of family structure, including single parent households, which typically refers to father-absent families, has been explored in relation to a wide variety of factors, including income level and child food insecurity. Miller et al. (2014) conducted research to examine the impact of family structure (re-partnered or co-habiting biological parents) on child food insecurity. The study compared the probabilities of food insecurity across family structured from four national data sets, including the Panel Study of Income Dynamics-Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), and the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS; Miller et al., 2014). The researchers found that there are often no statistical differences between married-biological-parent families and single-mother families in terms of child food insecurity, after socio-demographic factors were adjusted for,

most of the differences between the types of family structured were no longer significant at the 95% level of confidence. This research showed that the level of child food insecurity did not differ based on the family structure after controlling for family size, household income, and maternal influences.

The literature on the impact of family structure, including that of father-absent households, has been explored in a variety of contexts, including in relation to the type and prevalence of child victimization. This study also explored the impact of contextual social and economic risk factors on child victimization, as well as the impact of victimization exposure on differences between differences in the levels of family stress. Turner et al. (2013) conducted research with the purpose of exploring the relationship among three primary variables: family structure, child mental health, and child victimization. In Turner and colleagues' (2013) research, the seven types of victimization of focus included the following: property crime, maltreatment, peer victimization, assault, exposure to violence in the community, and exposure to violence within the family home. Each of these types of victimization was then compared between three different family types, including: (a) two biological/adoptive parents, (b) single parent, and (c) step/cohabiting families. In a study of 4,046 American participants between two and 17 years of age who took the 2008 National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), Turner et al. (2013) found that children who live with a non-traditional family type, including a single-parent or step-parent household, reported higher levels of victimization when compared to children living in two-parent (either biological or adoptive) families. As previous research has suggested the importance of co-parenting, this study seems to support the idea as well. Turner et al. (2013) also identified factors contributing to child victimization risk, including: family adversity, high levels of negative parental conflict, community chaos, and families who struggle

with either drug or alcohol problems; predictably, children with higher amounts of exposure to different types of victimization were at the highest risk of developing distress-related symptoms. This section has revealed the multitude of factors impacting paternal disengagement, as well as the influences that this family structure (i.e., single-parent households) has on child well-being and behavior.

Other research has examined family structure in relation to other relevant factors relating to the development of personality traits predictive of academic and professional success. Dedonno and Fagan (2013) conducted research with the purpose of examining the impacts of family attributes (e.g., family structure, family communication, the level of education of the parents, and parent involvement) on college students' development of a sense of academic self-concept. In survey-based a study in which 155 participants attending a private university completed the Academic Self-Concept Scale and information regarding family attributes, Dedonno and Fagan found that families with two co-habiting parents were related to a higher level of academic self-concept when compared to single-parent households. This research is useful to the present study because it established that the influence of parents on their children extends into the years of young adulthood, and can have lasting impacts. In their study, Dedonno and Fagan specified parental involvement to be extracurricular hobbies such as sports, music, and arts and crafts; parents who often voiced their praise for their children and took part in group activities like arts and crafts often had children with higher levels of academic self-concept. The impact of family structure on the development of academically important traits is evident in the literature, and there is support that two-parent households are related to these desirable traits, and greater child well-being.

Demographic differences in paternal involvement. Research has also explored gender differences in the amount of time that parents spend with their children. Baker and Milligan (2013) conducted research with the purpose of testing previous research findings that suggested that fathers spend more time with their sons than their daughters, especially as the children age. In a study of families living in the U.S., the UK, and Canada, Baker and Milligan explored differences in parent-child mentoring activities (e.g., reading and teaching letters and numbers), and found that both parents reported allocating more time to their daughters than sons, even before the children reached one year of age; the authors suggest that this is a potential reason for the difference in pre-school-level math and reading scores, and suggested two reasons for differential parental time investments in their children based on gender (i.e., gender differences in the costliness of time inputs and parental preferences). This research showed that even though older research mentioned the difference in time allocation of fathers to their children based on gender differences, this may not be the case in reality. These results conflicted with the findings of previous research, indicating some disagreement in the literature.

Perceptions of the father-child relationship are important, because they can impact the quality of the parent-child relationship as well as relations between them. The literature reveals that daughters' perceptions of their fathers are impacted by the reason for absence, as well as paternal emotional affection (Krampe & Newton, 2012; Peyper et al., 2015). Krampe and Newton (2012) found that reason for father absence influenced daughter perceptions. If the absence was due to death, perceptions of the father were positive, but if the absence was due to divorce or parent separation, participants reported unfavorable perceptions of their father. There were also some subtle racial and age-based differences in father perceptions: whites had the most favorable views of their fathers when their parents were living together, African Americans

produced the most positive ratings of fathers that were not living with the family, and elder participants tended to rate their fathers less favorably (Krampe & Newton, 2012). In another study focusing on daughter perceptions, Peyper et al. (2015) found that perceptions of women with emotionally absent fathers included the following: fathers were perceived to show little to no approval, acknowledgement, interest, emotional expression, and affection. Peyper et al. also found that paternal emotional absence negatively influences the emotional well-being of young women, and that the women believed their relationships with their fathers to be related to the way they relate to men, highlighting the important role of the father in daughter development.

Previous research has also explored the impact of father absence on child behavior. In a survey-based study of 672 Turkish students, Tastan (2013) found that the father-child relationship was weakly, positively related both to constructive and destructive styles of conflict resolution. In another similar study using existing data with 3,000 respondents, Geller et al. (2012) found that children whose fathers were incarcerated were unique in several ways, including that they exhibited higher levels of aggression and attention problems when compared to children whose fathers were not incarcerated. Geller et al. also found that behavioral effects of incarcerated absent fathers are greater than for absent fathers who are not incarcerated. Other research on father absence due to incarceration (Strauss, 2013) found that transference during counseling is associated with emotional disturbances due to father absence. This knowledge of whether or not the reason for father absence was due to incarceration is significant in to children's outcomes, and introduces the idea of other father influences on child development, like aggressive behaviors, in shaping child development. In other words, even though this research focused on the positive influence of father involvement and, conversely, the negative influence of father uninvolvement, it is important to note that in cases where the father is violent

or has a destructive lifestyle, father involvement may not be as beneficial. Later research addressed the quality of the father-child relationship, rather than just father presence or absence.

Criminal behavior and father incarceration. Changes in family structure have been found to not only impact child well-being, but also the likelihood that children will take part in criminal behaviors. Ikäheimo et al. (2013) conducted research with the purpose of exploring the impact of family structure on criminal behavior. In a study of 508 adolescent participants who had received psychiatric inpatient treatment between a specified time frame (2000-2006) derived from the Finnish Legal Register Centre, Ikäheimo et al. found that participants from single-parent families were likely to be involved in crimes at an early age compared to two-parent families, after controlling for family, clinical, and socio-demographic differences. Ikäheimo et al. also reported that adolescent participants from single-parent family households are associated with an unstable, and sometimes unsafe, home environments; this has particular implications for children with mental health disorders. The research has consistently shown the impact of family transitions on child well-being and behavior, as the previous study expanded upon by focusing on criminal behaviors.

While Ikäheimo et al. (2013) found that criminal behavior is associated with children growing up in single-parent households, it is also important to understand the breadth of the literature that has documented the impact of father absence on child well-being. Mitchell et al. (2015) justified their research by arguing that previous research has established the relationship between the instability of the family structure and children's well-being/"life chances," with single-parent families worse off than two-parent families, in terms of child well-being. Mitchell et al. conducted research with the purpose of exploring the relationship between the stability of the family structure on child well-being; specifically, this research focused on the "entrances and

exits" of biological and social fathers (e.g. step-parents). In a study using data from the Fragile

Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Mitchell et al. tested for interactions between the instability

of the family structure and the child's demographic (e.g. age, gender) and genetic characteristics,

and found that having absent fathers is associated with higher risk for have antisocial behaviors,

especially among boys, which is associated with well-being and health during adulthood.

Additionally, biological father entrances were associated with more pro-social and less antisocial

behavior; social father entrances were associated with less pro-social and more antisocial

behavior (Mitchell et al., 2015). While the age of the child did not moderate the association

between father entrances/exits and antisocial behavior, genetic factors were significant (Mitchell

et al., 2015). Not only are the entrances and exits of biological and social parents influential for

children's health and well-being, but socio-economic factors such as income may also have an

impact.

The reasons for father absence during childhood can vary from geographical distance,

lack of interest in being involved, negative relations with the mother, substance abuse issues, and

others. In a study of another type of reason for father absence that is not often studied—military

deployment—Louie and Cromer (2014) corroborated their findings with previous research that

attachment disruption is associated with unique socio-psychological challenges in children, as is

the case when their father comes back after an extended period. Additionally, having a

preparation strategy in place to maintain the father-child relationship during absence and upon

return is associated with less parenting stress (Louie & Cromer, 2014). As this section has

revealed, marital relations (Gil, 2014; Holland and McElwain, 2013; Werneck et al., 2014), the

perception of the father-child relationship by the mother, the type of family structure a child

transitions to once the father leaves (Kalil et al. 2014), the fathers' perceptions of their roles

(Bryan, 2014), physiological (Perini et al., 2012) as well as other factors all have an impact on the level of paternal involvement in their children's lives. The next section will expand upon the converse side of this topic: positive child impacts due to father involvement.

The protective effect of the father. This section will expand upon specific aspects of father involvement that have a positive impact on child well-being. Scholars have found that positive father involvement is associated with a variety of behaviors in children, including less sexual activity, less drunken behavior, lower susceptibility to peer pressure, and more healthy eating attitudes (Choo & Shek, 2013; Miles-McLean, 2014; Wright et al., 2013). In fact, previous research made the connection between father presence and the safety of the community; Mackey and Buttram (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring how present fathers relate to the amount of violent crime taking place in the community. In their analysis, Mackey and Buttram reported that in communities where many fathers are present, there is significantly less violent crime compared to communities where many fathers are absent, although there are other factors explaining this difference.

One approach of recent research is to explore the father-daughter relationship in the context of other cultures (e.g., South Africa; Lesch & Scheffler, 2015; Wessels & Lesch, 2014), as well as how struggles unique to racial identity are explored (Johnson, 2013). In a series of interviews with 84 participants in a South African context, Lesch and Scheffler (2015) found that many of the participating fathers reported a desire for a better life for their daughters than they had, and expanded upon the strategies employed to achieve this goal.

In a similar study, Wessels and Lesch (2014) focused on how different life stages impacted father nurturing. The authors found that daughters reported the highest amount father involvement and nurturance while growing up, and the lowest amount of father involvement

during young adulthood; the women also reported that their father's parenting exceeded that of traditional gender/parental roles (Wessels & Lesch, 2014). In a study of 79 interviews with 40 black women aged 18-22, Johnson (2013) found that the relationship quality with the women's fathers influenced the ways in which participants navigated "discourses of strength and respectability," in the context of conflicting expectations of black women to be both respectable and strong. This study illustrated the everyday ways in which fathers contribute to the negotiation of the identities of their children, particularly their daughters.

To help explain social expectations and contexts in which paternal expectations and roles are shaped, it is necessary to understand perceptions of the role of the father, and how this relates to paternal involvement. In a qualitative study of interviews with Italian participants who described masculinity within the context of child care, Puppa and Miele (2015) explored notions of masculinity in Italy and found that while the father-as-breadwinner model is losing legitimacy, the "male helper" model of fathering is gaining legitimacy as a model of masculinity. Additionally, social actors (educational and early childhood services professionally, parent employers, national and local institutional professionals) help to construct and legitimize the male helper model of fatherhood. This illustrated the influential role of the general community in facilitating an environment that encourages father social and emotional involvement with their children.

Recent research has also focused on the role of specific qualities of the father-child relationship, and their impacts on a variety of adverse behaviors in their children, including drunkenness, eating attitudes, and sexual behavior (Choo & Shek, 2013; Miles-McLean, 2014; Wright et al., 2013). In a survey of 313 female students, Wright et al. (2013) found that paternal communication about sex moderated the relationship between teenage pregnancy television

viewing and the pregnancy risk (i.e., engagement in recent sexual intercourse). Female adolescents who watched teenage pregnancy television shows whose fathers did not talk to them about responsible sexual behavior had a greater pregnancy risk compared to females whose fathers did talk to them about sexual behavior; interestingly, mother-child sexual communication was not as important (Wright et al., 2013). Not only is sexual communication important to child development, but so is the parenting style.

The impact of parental relations on the development of eating disorders in children has been documented in previous research. In a quantitative study focusing on the level of care and overprotection in the father-daughter relationship, Miles-McLean et al. (2014) found that high levels of care and low levels of overprotection were associated with positive eating attitudes. Miles-McLean et al. (2014) also found that caring, overprotective fathers exacerbate daughters' body shame and surveillance, as well as negative affects associated with having a negative body image, suggesting that a positive father-daughter relationship can protect against self-objectification and its negative impacts.

In a study of ordered logit analyses with 1,599 survey responses, Choo and Shek (2013) found that the father-child relationship moderated the relationship between peer pressure and the level of drunkenness among adolescents. Choo and Shek also found that family conflict had an effect on drunkenness, and a moderating relationship on the association between drinking frequency and direct peer pressure, with adolescents experiencing stronger peer pressure who have high levels of family conflict, compared to adolescents whose family did not have any recurring, serious conflict. Previous research has focused on father involvement, as well as the specific qualities of the father-child relationship, on a variety of child outcomes, including sexual activity, drunken behavior, peer pressure, and eating attitudes (Choo & Shek, 2013; Miles-

McLean, 2014; Wright et al., 2013). The next section will delve into specific paternal influences on daughter behavior.

Specific Paternal Influences on Daughter Behavior

Now that general impact of father involvement and disengagement have been discussed, this section will focus on specific paternal impacts on daughter development and psychological, social, and academic functioning, as well as sexual behavior. This section will also explore social and psychological responses. Different facets and combinations of these factors are also explored in the literature to guide understanding of the impact of father involvement/absence on specific facets of child development, and how this extends into adulthood. As this section will outline, the role of the father is invaluable in that a child's development, and particularly that of the daughter, are directly related to father presence, as well as the quality of the father-daughter relationship. Following this section, I will focus on the specific variable of interest for this study, which is how father absence relates to decisions that his children make in adulthood, including professional and romantic ones.

Psychological and social development. Previous research has focused on negative impacts associated with father uninvolvement, which can have an impact on physiological responses, social interaction, and mental well-being. In a physiological approach to exploring the influence of the father-daughter relationship on social interaction, Craven et al. (2012) explored the link between the quality of father-daughter relationships and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (salivary cortisol) and autonomic nervous system in late adolescence during social interactions. Craven et al. (2012) found that the quality of father-daughter interactions influenced the level of salivary cortisol (positive relationships associated with lower levels of salivary cortisol and vice versa) as well as social cognition, but relationship quality had no effect on

automatic nervous system levels. Specifically, participants who reported positive father-daughter relationships exhibited low pre-task cortisol levels, and cortisol responses to a peer discussion were lessened; in contrast, participants who reported problematic father-daughter relationships had higher pre-task cortisol levels, and a more pronounced elevation in cortisol when engaging in a peer discussion (Craven et al., 2012). In addition, women who grew up without an involved father were more sensitive to changes in mood/emotion, and were more likely to disclose psychosocial stressors in a peer discussion (Craven et al., 2012). This revealed that not only is social interaction impacted by the father-daughter relationship, but so are involuntary physiological reactions, like the level of cortisol reactions during peer conversation.

Not only does father presence matter in terms of child development and well-being, but so does the way in which fathers interact with their children. Najam and Kausar (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the association between paternal involvement, acceptance and rejection, and the social and emotional adjustment of adolescents. In a study in which 100 Pakistani teenagers were administered four surveys (the Father Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire, the Personality Assessment Questionnaire, the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, and the Teacher's Evaluation of Student Conduct), Najam and Kausar found that higher levels of paternal warmth were significantly associated with lower levels of adolescent dependency, hostility, negative self esteem, depression, and negative world view. Paternal rejection and hostility were significantly positively related higher levels of behavioral problems and depressive symptoms in adolescents (Najam & Kausar, 2012). The following factors were associated with depression in adolescents: father rejection, emotional instability, and dependency (Najam & Kauser, 2012). When fathers were more involved in their children's lives, adolescents displayed less hostility, dependency, depressive symptoms, feelings of

inadequacy, negative self-esteem, emotional unresponsiveness, and showed a more positive

worldview compared to adolescents whose fathers were uninvolved in their lives (Najam &

Kauser, 2012). Finally, Najam and Kauser noted significant gender disparities regarding

perceptions of father rejection and acceptance, depression, conduct problems, and personalities.

This research supported the idea that when children have an involved father in their lives, they

are more likely to develop desirable social and psychological traits and behaviors.

Other studies have focused specifically on psychological variables, financial resources,

and levels of education on the psychological, social, and emotional functioning of children in the

context of a parental separation. Mandemakers and Kalmijn (2014) conducted research to

explore whether parental educational level and resources influence the impact of parental divorce

on well-being (measured by the mother's reports on child psychological condition and test scores

from math and reading tests). In a study analyzing child well-being and parental divorce from the

British Cohort Study, Mandemakers and Kalmijn found that fathers with higher levels of

education are associated with worsened well-being for children following divorce; in contrast,

high levels of maternal educational attainment improved the post-divorce experience for

children. Families with more financial resources are also associated with better child well-being

following divorce, when compared with families lacking financial resources. This showed that

not only are parent divorce and educational levels influential on child well-being, but so is the

amount of financial resources available to the family. Other than having an educated parent, the

quality of the parent-child relationship can also be a protective factor for child well-being, and

may make it less likely that the child will engage in aggressive behaviors.

Other research has stressed the quality of the parent-child relationship and attachment in

predicting child outcomes, including aggressive behaviors. For example, Gallarin and Alonso-

Arbiol (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of testing the mediating role of parent-child attachment on the relationship between parenting practices and child aggression; the authors also set out to understand the differences between the influence of mothers and fathers on their children's aggressiveness. In a survey-based study of 554 adolescent participants between 16 and 19 years of age (224 boys and 330 girls), Gallarin and Alonso-Arbiol used structural equation modeling to analyze the data. They found that the quality of the father-child relationship was related to the amount of aggression that the son or daughter exhibited during adolescence. Gallarin and Alonso-Arbiol also found that the level of acceptance or involvement of each parent positively predicted the attachment of adolescents to their parents, while the level of coercion or imposition of each parent negatively predicted attachment. This revealed that the nature and quality of the parent-child relationship—specifically, the types of interaction the child has with the parent—impacts the attachment of the child to the parent.

Not only is child aggression impacted by the quality of father involvement, but so is women's social communication. In a meta-analysis of research completed thus far regarding the impact of father absence on adolescent development, East et al. (2006) explored women's perceptions about paternal relationships within the context of a father-absent childhood in a review of the overall literature. East et al. recommended the exploration of lived experiences of women whose fathers were absent during childhood. Jackson (2010) assessed the influence on father disengagement with women's social communication by exploring how women without present father figures communicated with their romantic partners. Jackson (2010) described the lived experiences growing up in homes with absentee fathers on women's communication styles and their maintenance of romantic relationships. Not only were women's communication styles

and romantic relations impacted by father involvement, but so were qualities related to the development of self-esteem.

Previous research has found that pro-social qualities are influenced by the father-daughter relationship. Lu et al. (2010) explored paternal involvement and its impact on children in the African American community, and found that greater paternal involvement was positively associated with the following outcomes: psychosocial maturity, life satisfaction, psychological well being, empathy, positive social interaction, and self-understanding. The results of the study support the contribution of fathers in influencing the decision-making patterns of their daughters. Perkins (2001) explored the role of paternal interactions in daughters' life decisions and self-appraisal. The researcher performed a multivariate analysis of variance of 96 college-aged women's responses to a survey used to measure self-image, interpersonal needs, assertiveness, and cognition, called "The Adjective Checklist," as well as a father-daughter questionnaire. Perkins found that women's self-perceptions were impacted by the type of father-daughter relationship (distant, doting, demanding/supportive, domineering, seductive, and absent). As this section has shown, father absence is associated with daughters' reduced psychological well-being, different physiological responses, and the quality of social interaction. The next section will expand upon the expansive literature suggesting a link between paternal involvement and daughter sexual activity.

Sexual activity. The literature has overwhelmingly supported the idea that father involvement has an impact on daughters' sexual activities, romantic relationships, and levels of sexual risk-taking behaviors. In one such study, Delpriore et al. (2013) conducted research to establish a causal link between absentee fathers/low-quality paternal involvement and sexual risk taking of their daughters in a randomized experiment, controlling for genetic and environmental

factors, since much of the previous literature had focused on natural/correlational research. In a series of five experiments, Delpriore et al. found that "reminders of paternal disengagement increased women's activation of sexual thoughts, sexual permissiveness, and negativity toward condom use," (p. 234) establishing a causal link between paternal disengagement and the sexual behavior of their daughters. Interestingly, these impacts of paternal un-involvement/absenteeism only influenced females' sexual decision making, and not that of males/sons; additionally, paternal un-involvement did not impact women's non-sexual risk taking.

In another related study, Ellis et al. (2012) explored the causal effect of father involvement on the risky sexual behavior of daughters, by controlling environmental and genetic influences through a controlled sibling design experiment. The study utilized 101 pairs of sisters between 18 and 36 years of age. This research was one of the first studies taking a more experimental, rather than qualitative or correlational, approach to the impact of father absence on child development (in this case, sexual activity). Ellis et al. investigated the impacts of sibling pairs' differences in exposure to father uninvolvement, family disruption, and parenting quality. Ellis et al. found that high-quality paternal involvement is a protective factor against risky sexual behavior, and absentee fathering was a risk factor. When there was a substantial age gap between the sisters, the similarity of reports of the quality of paternal investment were the most different, indicating that the time gap between the children could be associated with changes in the father's parenting style; for the most part, siblings close in age reported similarly. Not only does paternal involvement impact sexual risk taking, but it also has an influence on how early adolescents have their first sexual experience.

Previous research has established the impact of paternal sexual communication on the development of daughters' sexual behaviors. Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2012) explored the role of

paternal investment on the sexual behavior of adolescents, and assessed the methodological quality of research in a systematic review of the literature. The authors reviewed 13 articles published from 1980-2011 that focused on children from 11-18 years; these articles were assessed using a scoring system containing 11 items. Guilamo-Ramos et al. found that paternal influences were more strongly associated with the sexual behavior of adolescents, when compared with maternal influences. While paternal attitudes of sex were least associated with adolescent sexual behavior, father communication about sex was consistently associated with sexual behavior. More rigorous research is needed surrounding the different aspects of paternal influence on the sexual behavior of adolescents. Limits of methodologies used in this research included: an over-reliance on cross-sectional designs, non-probability sampling, and focusing on sex rather than "broader sexual behavior." This reflects a potential avenue for further research, by focusing on research on sexual behavior rather than just on sexual intercourse to get a more accurate measurement. While this research focused on analyzing a survey of sexual behavior, the next research study of interest will be more in-depth, using a qualitative method to explore specific communication styles that fathers employed with their children.

Expanding upon the importance of father-daughter sexual communication, Hutchinson (2011) set out to explore the communication of fathers with their daughters about sexual behavior, in the context of the knowledge that paternal involvement is associated with positive psychological and social outcomes, including delaying participation in sexual intercourse, and engaging in sexual behavior less frequently. In this study, participants were asked to describe paternal contributions to sexual socialization (i.e. preparing for dating and sexuality) using four open-ended questions. Through completion of a thematic content analysis, Hutchinson found that although fathers were minimally involved in sexual socialization and identified effective ways to

address this topic. Hutchinson also recommended assistance to fathers in improving their comfort in father-child sexual communication, identifying challenges, and incorporating skill-building exercises promoting safe sex and abstinence. In a cross-sectional study that explored perceptions of father-daughter communication with 76 participants, Miller et al. (2013) found that fathers and daughters had similar perceptions of the most- and least-frequently discussed topics, but differed on perceptions of the degree of sexual communication. Miller et al. suggested that these results reflect the need of interventions to improve the comfort of fathers in discussing responsible sexual behavior with their daughters.

Even if it is known that fathers impact sexual behavior in daughters, it is not known whether this impacts sexual and non-sexual risk taking. Rostad et al. (2014) sought to determine to what extent the quality of father-daughter relationships predicted risk-taking behaviors in a sample of 203 female college students. Rostad et al. analyzed survey responses to several scales that assessed paternal psychological involvement, as well as the participants' substance use, sexual risk-taking, depression, and impulsivity. Rostad et al. found that after controlling for mood, impulsivity, and other risky behavior, paternal psychological involvement predicted illegal substance use and sexual risk-taking, although it was unrelated to alcohol use. This study established the importance of paternal psychological involvement as a protective factor against some risky behaviors. In another study focusing on paternal involvement, La Guardia et al. (2014) explored the impact of father absenteeism on the sexual development and behavior of daughters in terms of the age of first sexual intercourse experience. LaGuardia et al administered a 12-question survey to 342 undergraduate females, and found that participants who grew up with an absent father began menstruation earlier (timing of puberty mediated this relationship), and had sexual intercourse sooner when compared to participants with involved fathers. This

revealed that father involvement in their daughters' lives can promote abstinence and safe sexual behaviors by communicating appropriate sexual norms and expectations.

Not only is sexual communication important for child development and healthy behaviors, but so is the nature of these relationships. In one study exploring the impacts of specific qualities of the parental relationship on child sexual behavior, Madkour (2012) explored how parental support and the parents' knowledge of children's daily activities related to whether or not daughters had engaged in sexual intercourse before age 16. Madkour ran univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses on a sample of 7,466 females between 14 and 16 years old from nine countries who had taken part in the 2005 "Health Behaviors in School Aged Children" survey. The researcher found that parental support for mothers and fathers was significantly and negatively related to daughters that were having sex at age 16. Parental knowledge was suggested to be a mediating variable between parental support and early sexual initiation. While parental knowledge, communication, and support are vital to healthy sexual development in adolescents, other research has focused on how these sexual norms manifest themselves in romantic relationships of women.

In one such study that focused on the romantic relationships in children with absent fathers during adulthood, Alleyne-Green et al. (2015) investigated the impact of paternal involvement in the reduction of sexual risk and dating violence, and to determine whether dating violence mediates the relationship between sexual risk taking and paternal involvement. In a study based on structural equation modeling of 422 survey responses from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health that were completed by sexually-active African American adolescents between 13 and 21 years, Alleyne-Green et al. (2015) found that the likelihood of victimization from dating violence was not reduced by perceived father closeness,

although it was associated with lower levels of sexual risk-taking. This showed that the likelihood of having experienced dating violence may be predicted by factors other than father involvement, while risky sexual behavior is impacted. Given the knowledge from previous research discussing the importance of father-daughter sexual communication in the establishment of positive, healthy sexual norms and behaviors, this could be due to a lack of father-child discussion on responsible sexual behavior. Fathers not only have an impact on their daughters' sexual behavior, but other research suggests that family structure has an impact as well.

Research has established that positive paternal involvement in a child's life is associated with healthy sexual behavior in adolescents. In a study using data from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Manlove et al. (2012) assessed the relationship between family structure (parent-child relationships, and parent-parent relationships) and the context of the child's first sexual encounter. Manlove et al. found that a strong father-daughter relationship was associated with less risk of taking part in casual sex. Manlove et al. also found that more parental monitoring was linked to a reduced change of the child taking part in sexual intercourse. As reflected by the literature, the importance of father involvement to females' development of sexual norms and facilitation of positive opposite-sex relationships is evident. The next section will expand upon the influence of paternal involvement on academic performance and motivation.

Academic performance. Not only are women's sexual activities impacted by father involvement while growing up, but so is the development of academic skills and attitudes. Pruett et al. (2009) explored how father absence impacts the decision making of his children in a low-income, cross-cultural preventive intervention context. Pruett et al. found that paternal academic support was related positively to the academic motivation, perceived importance of grades, and

the positive valuation of education. Like Lu et al. (2010), Pruett et al. (2009) supported the assumption that the absence of fathers influences children's decision-making processes. Pruett et al. also found that having contact with fathers related to better academic performance, as well as social and emotional functioning. This research informed the role of the father in child decision-making.

Mackey and Mackey (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the relationship between a father's physical presence and his children's high school graduation. In their analysis, Mackey and Mackey found that a father's presence in the home makes it more likely that his child will graduate from high school and reach higher levels of educational attainment. These findings reflected knowledge from previous research on the impact of family structure on a variety of behaviors and outcomes of the child.

Other research has focused on the role of parental educational attainment on the academic achievement of the child. Kalmijn (2015) conducted research to explore the impact of family disruption (married, divorced, and step-parents) on intergenerational reproduction, with the two measures of reproduction being church attendance and educational attainment. Kalmijn found that for educational attainment, married and divorced fathers were equally influential, while stepfathers were comparatively less so; for church attendance, divorced fathers were least influential, married fathers were the most influential, and step fathers were in-between the two. Interestingly, married mothers were less influential compared to divorced mothers. Divorced fathers have an important role in transmitting education regarding early advantages. The findings from this research reflected that although mothers are influential in child development, fathers have a particularly strong influence on their children's educational attainment.

Previous research has also focused on the role of parental social capital and financial resources, and the impact of these factors on child academic performance. Mungai (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of investigating the impact of financial and social capital family factors on children's academic achievement and study habits; the researcher also compared the differences between the mother and father. In a study of 182 seventh-grade girls from nine different schools in Kenya, Mungai completed cross-tabulations, chi-square analyses, logistic regression, and frequency counting, and found that both financial and social capital had a significant, positive effect on the study habits and academic performance of children. Mungai also found that although students' academic performance was positively influenced by the level of education of both parents, fathers' education level had a greater effect on daughters' study habits when compared with the mother. This corroborated other research findings regarding the vital role of the father's education level on child development.

Do children's perceptions of their fathers matter, and how does this influence the level of academic performance of the child at school? Marissa and Ishaaq (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the relationship between daughters' perceptions of their father and academic achievement. In a survey-based quantitative study of 15-16 year olds in Indonesia, Marissa and Ishaaq found a positive, significant relationship between academic achievement and father involvement, supporting their hypothesis. In other words, low levels of father involvement were associated with low levels of academic performance, and high levels of father involvement were associated with high levels of academic achievement. These results were similar to others mentioned in this literature, and complemented the knowledge that two parents are better than one.

Not only does the father's presence and involvement positively impact his children, but so does the level of his education, especially if he has at least some college education. Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the relationship between the following three variables: (a) characteristics of parents, (b) ecological, and (c) the academic performance of high school-aged male African American students. In a study of 153 participants, Hines and Holcomb-McCoy used the Parenting Style Index and a demographic survey and found that although there was no significant relationship between student honor course enrollment and parenting styles, the father's educational achievement and involvement of both parents positively predicted children's grade point average. Additionally, father expectations negatively predicted the student's grade point average. Although this research focuses on male high school students, insights can be extrapolated and applied to research on the father-daughter relationship as well.

Other research has focused specifically on the types of social engagement that fathers take part in with their children at a young age, and how this corresponds to their academic development. Baker (2014) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the impact of African American fathers' caregiving, literary involvement with the child, and play activities on children's math and reading educational assessments. In a study of 750 participants from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Birth Cohort, Baker found that the education level of fathers predicted the level of child educational attainment, suggesting the vital role that fathers play in child development, including educational performance. Black fathers who read books, shared stories, sang songs to their children, and had readily-available children's books in their homes had children who earned higher math and reading scores in pre-school. This reflected the

invaluable contribution of father participation, especially early in life, to molding the child into what he or she will eventually become.

Given consistent findings in the literature that fathers play a vital role in their daughters' sexual behavior, academic performance, and psycho-social functioning, it is important to look at these influences long-term to see how these differences play out in adult life. Not only are children impacted by father involvement, but they are also impacted by the level of educational attainment of the father and by family disruption. Considering that academic, psychological, social, and sexual behaviors while growing up play a role in shaping ultimate romantic and professional decisions, the next section will focus on the adult lives of women that grow up without positively involved fathers during their childhood.

Absent Fathers' Influence on Daughters' Marriage, Careers, and Lifestyle Decisions

This section will focus on the aspects of the literature directly relating to the variables of interest in this study. Specifically, these variables include the lifestyle decisions that women make in adult life, including professional and romantic ones, in the context of father involvement or absence. Female reproductive decisions, marital relationship satisfaction, and the choice to marry are all impacted by the level of father involvement during childhood. This knowledge informed the specific types of romantic and professional decisions that were of focus in this research.

Marriage and romantic decisions. Although the psychological, social, sexual, and academic impacts of fathers on their daughters is well known, there is less information available about how father-daughter relationship quality impacts marital relations and reproductive decisions. In one study addressing this gap, Baggett et al. (2015) explored the association between paternal parentification (i.e., role reversal where the child acts as a caregiver, and the

father acts like a child) and perceived relationship satisfaction using a sample of 542 college-aged women. Baggett et al. found that paternal parentification is positively related with insecurity in romantic relationships, and negatively related with satisfaction in romantic relationships, after maternal parentification was controlled. In another study focusing on marital relationships, Haaza et al. (2014) explored the impact of having divorced parents on women's marital relationships in adulthood, using a sample of 90 women in an online survey. The researchers found that marital intimacy was associated with the quality of the father-daughter relationship, but marital communication and commitment were not linked to paternal relationship strength. This finding corroborated knowledge present in the literature regarding the importance of the father-daughter relationship.

In other research on the father-daughter relationship, it has been established that sexual behavior and reproductive decisions are shaped by paternal involvement. For example, Sheppard et al. (2014) set out to explore the relationship between father absence and reproductive decisions made by daughters in lower-income countries (in this case, Malaysia), because the current literature focuses on this topic in the context of industrialized countries. In a study of 567 survey respondents, Sheppard et al. corroborated previous findings that paternal absence is related to reproduction-related outcomes in their children. Specifically, Sheppard et al. found that father absence during late childhood (8-15 years) was related to earlier age of marriage and child rearing, although father absence did not impact the family size desired by the participants. These findings showed that low quality paternal relationships are associated with decreased marital intimacy, satisfaction, and increased insecurity (Baggett et al., 2015; Haaza et al., 2014), and father absence is associated with earlier age of marriage and child rearing (Sheppard et al.,

2014). The next section will expand upon another area of study with limited information: the impact of father absence on daughters' career and other major life decisions.

Career and other life decisions. As this section will expand upon, the role that a father plays in his child's life impacts the eventual career and other life decisions of his children. Specifically, income levels, educational performance, the development of self-efficacy (career-specific), career identity and development, job security, self-esteem, life satisfaction, as well as other variables, are all factors impacted by the absence of a father figure while growing up. In one study on how father absence impacts daughter income level, DeBell (2008) found that income levels were lower for women whose fathers were absent during childhood, and linked parental financial support for single mothers to children's educational performance. DeBell also found that gender roles exhibited in women's adult lives were related to father absence during childhood. In a study that investigated the impact of father job security on career-specific self-efficacy, Zhao et al. (2012) found that fathers' job security was positively related to engagement, and positively related to the level of support. Additionally, Zhao et al. (2012) found that the relationship between the father's job security to career self-efficacy in children differed due to different mediating variables; for daughters, the mediating variable was support, while the mediating variable for sons was lack of engagement. The influence of father involvement on self-efficacy is essential to understanding how women develop the driving force behind their career decisions, which ultimately end up shaping their career decisions later in life.

Another trend of recent research is the development of similar studied to ones already existent in the literature, but applied in another cultural setting (most previous research took place in wealthy, industrialized, Western countries and cultures). In one such study, Sarwar and Azmat (2013) conducted research to explore variables influencing professional decisions made

by Pakistani university graduates. In a survey-based study measuring five categories (personality, family, social life, environmental influences, and career preferences), Sarwar and Azmat found that family variables—specifically, fathers' education—influenced the professional decisions made by participants. In another study focusing on the influence of father involvement in an inter-cultural context, Liu et al. (2015) conducted research to explore how parents influence child career development in the context of China. In an interpretative phenomenological analysis focusing on parents with children in fifth grade, Liu et al. found that six main behaviors were used by fathers to shape child career identity and development: stressing educational importance, encouraging independent academic/career decision making, dialogue on child career curiosity, facilitating opportunities for career interest knowledge attainment, dialogue about gender stereotypes in careers, and using mothers as career role models. As revealed in this research, positive socialization with parents can mitigate negative impacts.

Other studies have further expanded upon specific father-child interactions that shape a child's development of self-efficacy. For example, Pizzorno et al. (2014) explored the role that parents play in influencing child career development using a gender perspective. In a study of interviews with 36 participants of nine families of four members (father, mother, son, daughter), Pizzorno et al. found that the construction of career stories were facilitated most by same-sex dyads (i.e., either the father-son or mother-daughter), and that father-daughter dyads were the least important in terms of career stories. This study demonstrated the impact of child and parent gender in shaping the interactions between the two, and how parents approach narratives about career development.

Other research has focused on specific aspects of the father-daughter relationship and how they influence daughter well-being. Allgood et al. (2012) conducted a study with the

purpose of examining the role of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility in the father-daughter relationship on daughters' well-being. In a survey-based study of 99 18-21 year old female participants whose fathers had resided with them during their teenage years, Allgood et al. found that engagement and accessibility were related to daughters' life satisfaction and self-esteem, although responsibility was not statistically significant. This showed that even if a father is present without fulfilling all of his parental responsibilities, he can still have a positive impact on his children.

Although one study found that fathers told daughters less constructive career stories than they told to their sons (Pizzorno et al., 2014), the literature also revealed the importance of positive father involvement in their children's lives (DeBell, 2008), and the link between father job security and self-efficacy in children (Zhao et al., 2012). In particular, women's relationship satisfaction, income level, educational performance, self-esteem, and financial security were all tied to paternal involvement during childhood (DeBell, 2008). There is currently little research regarding a daughter's lived experience of father absence. Therefore, the current study extended the understanding of this phenomenon.

Summary and Conclusions

A review of the literature has revealed that a father's involvement in his daughter's life not only plays an important role in influencing the daughter's psychological well-being, responses to peer pressure, sexual activity, academic performance and behavior, but also her decisions made later in life, including career and romantic ones. However, there is little research that has explored the lived experience of daughters growing up with an absent father. Indeed, previous research has called for more in-depth qualitative research focusing on experiences, personal decisions, and attributes of females that grew up without a stable father figure (DeBell,

2008), as well as diverse components of paternal influences on daughter behavior (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2012). This study helped to fill these gaps by exploring the lived experiences of daughters who grew up without a father, through the lens of phenomenology. In Chapter 3, I will discuss and describe the methodology of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. This chapter will include discussion of the study's methodological plan. The first section will contain discussion of the selected research design and the rationale for its appropriateness. The second section will contain the methodological procedures of the study. The third section will involve identifying issues on trustworthiness, including ethical considerations relevant to the study. The chapter ends with a summary of the key procedures of the methodology.

Research Design and Rationale

The central phenomenon that I explored in this study was the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. Based on the problem identified and the corresponding purpose, the research questions of the study were:

1. What are the lived experiences of daughters who had absent fathers, at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods?

2. What are the essential meanings of these experiences to the daughters' lives as children and as adults?

3. How do the life struggles of daughters with absent fathers shape their life decision-making patterns?

To explore the central phenomenon, I used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research does not include a specific set of analyses or variables such as in quantitative studies,

but rather provides an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of a group of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative research is a systematic approach to examining a phenomenon by relying on the constructive experiences of individuals (Silverman, 2013).

A qualitative research approach was appropriate for the current study, because the methodological principles of collecting in-depth data, subjectivity, and constructivism aligned with the objectives and purpose of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Researchers use qualitative research to guide studies where the goal is to understand a phenomenon using tools that would elicit detailed information that cannot be uncovered in standardized instruments that have pre-determined responses (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The range of answers and explanations that can be uncovered in qualitative research is varied because of the open-ended nature of the data collection tools used (Silverman, 2013). Quantitative research would not be able to provide the same variety and depth of the responses that can be gained from qualitative studies.

I explored the lived experiences of daughters with fathers who were absent using a phenomenological research design in order to understand and depict the phenomenon accurately. The selection of phenomenological research design was appropriate because the emphasis was on exploring the lived experiences of daughters who had absent fathers (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological research is used in studies where the subjective perceptions and experiences of a group of people are central to the understanding of a specific phenomenon.

Other qualitative research designs, such as case study, grounded theory, and ethnography were not appropriate because of lack of alignment with the purpose of the study. Case study was not appropriate because the lived experience of a group of individuals can be sufficiently

captured using semi-structured interviews, which does not align with the comprehensiveness of using multiple sources of data in case studies (Yin, 2013). Grounded theory was not appropriate because I was not focused on generating theories involving the decision-making process of daughters with absent fathers (Charmaz, 2014). Ethnography was not appropriate because daughters who had absent fathers do not constitute a unique ethnic or cultural group, which is the unit of analysis of ethnographic research (Hammersley, 2013).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher plays a central role in qualitative research (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). The researcher is often considered the main instrument of the study. As the main instrument of the study, I was responsible for the recruitment of participants, data collection, analysis of results, and dissemination of the findings.

Methodology

This section will outline in detail the methodological procedures of the current study. The section will include several discussions involving the methodology. The section will include the logic for the selection of participants; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and the data analysis plan.

Participant Selection Logic

The entire population of the study included all daughters with absent fathers in childhood in the United States. The sub-population only included daughters whose fathers were absent as a result of divorce that occurred when the child was from 5 to 10 years old. I did not include daughters whose absent father was a result of incarceration or death as part of the population.

I used purposeful and snowball sampling strategies to put together the target sample of daughters who grew up with absent fathers. Purposeful sampling is a non-probability technique

that focuses on key participant characteristics that need to be satisfied in order to be eligible to be part of the study (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2013). Purposeful sampling was appropriate because of the importance of ensuring that all participants satisfy the key criteria of the sample. Because target participants are not necessarily easy to reach, snowball sampling was used if the target sample size was not reached from the initial phases of the recruitment. Snowball sampling involves asking existing participants to refer eligible individuals to be part of the study (Goodman, 2011).

The inclusion criteria of the study was based on the following: (a) adult daughters who had absent fathers during childhood as a result of divorce and (b) adult daughters with absent fathers who still have mothers. Daughters whose fathers were absent as a result of death or incarceration were excluded from the study. Daughters whose parents got divorced when they were adults were also excluded from the study. To verify that that the participants satisfy all the inclusion criteria, I confirmed with every potential participant during recruitment that all the criteria were fulfilled.

The sample consisted of approximately 20 daughters with absent fathers. The rationale for the sample size was based on data saturation, which is important to establish the credibility of the study. Data saturation is the point when data become repetitive, indicating that adding more participants is no longer necessary to uncover the experience or perceptions of a sample (Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Francis et al. (2010), data saturation is often reached at approximately 12 participants. However, data saturation is unique to every study and may occur earlier or later than the sample size of 20 participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The sample size was reduced if the analysis demonstrates data saturation, but more participants would have been

recruited if data saturation had not occurred at the sample size of 20 individuals. Recruitment did not end until data saturation is evidenced.

Instrumentation

In qualitative studies, the researcher is often considered the most important instrument (Walker et al., 2013). As the researcher, I played an active role in the entire research process and made decisions that are integral to the study. As the main instrument of the study, I was responsible for the recruitment of participants, collection of data, analysis of results, and dissemination of the findings.

To improve my effectiveness as the interviewer, I prepared an interview guide containing all the key questions that I asked every participant. The interview guide was not a strict protocol, but a flexible guideline intended to assist me during the interview. I deviated from the guide if participants provided an answer that needed further clarification or a follow-up question.

To enhance the credibility of the interview guide instrument, I conducted an expert review to assess the appropriateness of the questions. I asked three experts in the field of conducting interviews to review the interview guide and provide feedback to enhance the effectiveness of the instrument. I analyzed and integrated the feedback of the three experts in order to determine the necessary changes that should be made to finalize the interview questions in the guide.

The interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder. After each interview was completed, I immediately transferred the audio recording file to my personal laptop. I assigned a unique code for every file, consistent with the corresponding code given to each participant.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruitment of potential participants was accomplished by posting several online advertisements through Facebook and Twitter. If not enough individuals responded to the online advertisements, I asked for referrals from my personal contacts. Personal contacts that fulfill all the eligibility criteria were not included in the sample to prevent bias and to avoid unethical practices concerning coercion and voluntary participation. I asked individuals who wish to be part of the study to sign informed consent forms before data collection started.

I collected data using semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face (see Appendix A for the interview guide). The interviews were mostly conducted in my own office, but the location was flexible, depending on the requests and availability of the participants. I coordinated with each participant to determine the preferred location and time of the interview, also keeping in mind confidentiality concerns of public places.

The researcher is responsible for the data collection process, which means that I conducted the interviews. I used an interview guide that I assessed through expert review by three experts to enhance the flow of the data collection process. The frequency of data collection for each participant was confined to one single interview. The duration of the interview was approximately 45-60 minutes.

Data were recorded using a digital recorder. I informed the participants that the interview sessions would be recorded so that data could be analyzed in the succeeding stages of the study. The participants were informed that the interview recordings would not be accessible to anyone and would only be used for the data analysis.

Even though the target sample size was 20 participants, the final sample was determined by data saturation. If data saturation was not reached with the initial target sample size, more

participants would have been recruited until data saturation is achieved. I would have expanded the sample size by adding more participants until the responses and stories shared reflect the data collected from the previous participants.

Debriefing concluded the interview process. After the interview, I explained to the participants that they would be contacted again through email for member checking during the data analysis phase of the study in order to increase the credibility of the findings. The process of member checking did not involve follow-up interviews, but a request from participants to review the accuracy of the preliminary data through electronic mail. I provided a summarized report before the formalization of the analysis, with the instruction of providing a short feedback about the accuracy of the summary in capturing their lived experience. The feedback gained from the participants through email communication assisted in improving the credibility of the results.

Data Analysis Plan

After the transcription process was completed, I used Nvivo software to store and organize all the transcripts that were generated from the interviews. Nvivo software is a program intended to store and organize large volumes of qualitative data for analysis (Azeem, Salfi, & Dogar, 2012). I was responsible for the actual data analysis, although Nvivo was useful in the coding process as a result of features that categorize chunks of data into codes.

For the three research questions, data analysis involved coding the data into themes. The analysis process was based on the five phases that Hycner (1999) developed to analyze data collected from phenomenological research. The five stages of the phenomenological data analysis included: (a) bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of

meaning, (c) clustering of data into themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) generating composite descriptions.

The first step in the data analysis involves the process of bracketing and reduction (Hycner, 1999). Bracketing involves the process of the researcher working to set aside their personal biases and preconceived ideas about the topic in preparation for the analysis of the data. Data reduction is the process of reducing large chunks of data within a given text into smaller units of meaning such as codes. These codes represent the smallest units of experience of the participants.

The second step of the phenomenological analysis is the delineation of units of meaning from the data (Hycner, 1999). This process involves assigning labels to the codes that were developed in the previous stage of analysis. I assigned code names or labels based on the prevailing meaning apparent from the section of data coded.

The third step involves the clustering of data into themes (Hycner, 1999). Based on the developed codes, I organized the data into clusters of themes based on their similarities with each other. I developed several categories that represented the core the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes.

The fourth step involves summarizing the experience of each participant (Hycner, 1999). I developed a summarized narrative of the lived experience of each participant based on the analysis of the interview transcripts. The summarized narrative contained direct quotes from the participants to strengthen the findings.

The fifth step of the phenomenological analysis is the generation of composite descriptions, containing the general and unique themes developed from the data (Hycner, 1999).

The composite description is an abstracted narrative of the experience of the entire sample as a group. The composite description does not rely on the experiences of a single participant, but on experiences that occur in several participants in the sample group.

Discrepant cases were handled by indicating the complete summary of lived experience of each participant. In these summaries, experiences that were not part of the core themes demonstrated the entire scope of the results. Including the discrepant cases enhanced the credibility of the results.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, researchers strive for trustworthiness in place of validity and reliability. Researchers can enhance trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln, 1995). I ensured that each of these was met.

Credibility or internal validity pertains to the accuracy of the results, reflecting the true experiences or perceptions of the participants (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). I used member checks and the process of reflexivity to enhance the credibility of the study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I conducted member checking with the participants with a summarized data of their own interviews through email to enhance the credibility of the findings. I provided an individual summarized report during the analysis phase, with the instruction to provide a short feedback about the accuracy of the summary in capturing their lived experience. The feedback that can be gained may assist in improving the credibility of the results.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized to other settings (Lincoln, 1995). To enhance the transferability of the results, I provided a rich description of the methodological procedure and the research context. The thick description will give future researchers sufficient information about the context in which the research has been

conducted, allowing for a more informed decision regarding the possible relevance of the findings to other related studies (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Dependability pertains to the extent to which the results can be considered repeatable or replicable by other researchers (Houghton et al., 2013). I used audit trails to enhance the dependability of the results (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The audit trails contained specific information of what I did at every stage of the data collection and data analysis. Dependability can be enhanced through audit trails by giving other researchers access to the researcher's decision-making, based on the actions taken during the course of the study.

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the results can be considered objective and satisfies the standards of trustworthy research (Lincoln, 1995). I enhanced the study's confirmability through reflexivity (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Reflexivity is the process of acknowledging the researcher's professional background, biases and opinions, and personal relationships that may affect the objectivity of the study (Walker et al., 2013).

Ethical Procedures

I documented agreements to gain access to participants through informed consent forms, which contained the key information of the study such as purpose, nature of data collection, and my contact details. Informed consent forms are necessary for ethical research, because participants need to be aware of the nature of the study. The participants' signature indicates acknowledgment of the terms detailed in the informed consent forms.

The treatment of human participants in the study could involve some minor risks of emotional and psychological discomfort, given that the nature of the topic is father absenteeism. In instances where participants became emotionally overwhelmed during the interviews, I

stopped the interview and ensured that proper mental health assistance was provided immediately by referring the participant to a licensed clinician.

Ethical issues relevant to the recruitment of participants involved inadvertent coercion to be part of the study. To prevent inadvertent coercion, I did not recruit individuals who have personal relationships with me, such as colleagues, friends, and family members. However, these personal contacts were used to recruit potential participants. All participants who were part of the study were volunteers.

Participants refusing participation or requesting early withdrawal from the study were immediately relieved of their participation in the study. Participants who wished to withdraw were not forced to continue participating in the study, even if data were already collected. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from participation in the study at any time, without any penalty. All data derived from participants who wish to withdraw were removed in the data analysis. The informed consent form can be viewed in the Appendix section (see Appendix A).

The data collected from the participants were treated as confidential, but not anonymous. This distinction means that I knew the identities of the participants, but personal information such as names were protected for confidentiality (den Hoonaard, Van den Hoonaard, den Hoonaard, & Van den Hoonaard, 2013). I protected these confidential data during the storage of data by assigning unique names to the participants in order to hide their identities. Instead of using the real names of the participants, I assigned unique codes to conceal the participants' identities during analysis and the presentation of findings.

In terms of the dissemination of the results, no third-party individuals had access to the raw data, but the results of the study as presented in the dissertation are accessible to the public.

The results presented in the dissertation did not contain the real names of the participants or any confidential information that would compromise the identities of the entire sample. The participants would no longer be able withdraw from the study after the dissertation has been approved and published.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. Qualitative research was appropriate to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of participants with depth and detail (Ritchie et al., 2013). The selection of phenomenological research design was appropriate because of the emphasis on exploring the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers (Moustakas, 1994).

The sample consisted of 20 daughters with absent fathers. The rationale for the sample size was based on data saturation, which is important to establish the credibility of the study. Data were collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. After loading the data to Nvivo software, data were analyzed using the five phases that Hycner (1999) developed to analyze data collected from phenomenological research. The five stages of the phenomenological data analysis involved: (a) bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of meaning, (c) clustering of data into themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) generating composite descriptions. Trustworthiness was enhanced through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln, 1995). The next chapter will include the presentation of the results of the data analysis, which will include the coding summary supported by direct quotes from the participants.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived

experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at

home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. The main

objective of this study was to explore how absent fathers affect the overall functioning of

daughters in various aspects of their lives. Three research questions were used to guide the

study, including:

1. What are the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers at home, in school, and

     in their neighborhoods?

2. What are the essential meanings of these experiences to the daughters' lives as children

     and as adults?

3. How do the life struggles of daughters with absent fathers shape their life decision-

     making patterns?

The following section of this chapter includes documentation of the absence of any

conditions that influenced participant experiences in a way that might affect the interpretation of

this study's results. Next, the chapter includes a brief description of the study participants'

demographics, followed by descriptions of the implementation of the data collection and data

analysis procedures described in chapter 3. The chapter then includes a discussion of the

evidence of this study's trustworthiness. This evidence is followed by a presentation of the

study's results. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Setting

No personal or organizational conditions influenced participants or their experience at the time of study in a way that may influence interpretation of the results.

Demographics

The sample included 20 adult women whose fathers became absent during the participants' childhoods (ages 5 - 10) due to divorce, rather than through death, incarceration, or other causes. Additionally, none of the participants had absent mothers. A summary of each participant's experience follows:

Participant 1

This participant reported missing her father as both a child and an adult, and expressed that a male perspective might have helped her to make better decisions. Her childhood was characterized by struggle, but her father's absence did not affect her school life, and households without fathers were common in the neighborhood where she grew up. As a child she felt confusion about the meaning of her father's absence, and his absence affected her decision-making about relationships. She achieved closure as an adult by realizing that her father's departure had nothing to do with her.

Participant 2

The absence of Participant 2's father did not affect her school life, but her childhood was characterized by struggle and by the misrepresentation (from her mother) that her father was away at work, rather than voluntarily absent. As an adult she missed her father's support and advice, particularly concerning relationships, but she initially reported that she did not feel that her father's absence influenced her decision-making patterns. Later in the interview, however, she indicated that her father's absence may have made her vulnerable to physical abuse from her

son's father, and may have caused her to project an idealized father figure onto potential romantic partners.

Participant 3

This participant missed her father's presence at her sporting events, which were important to her as a child, but she did not feel that her father's absence affected her academic performance or her experience of her childhood neighborhood. She did not understand her father's absence as a child, but as an adult she came to appreciate that her father had left at least in part because he was coping with multiple sclerosis. She wishes she had had his input when she began to date, and she took her anger over her father's departure out on her mother in altercations that sometimes became physical, but she learned from her father's absence to be self-reliant, particularly when it came to loving herself.

Participant 4

As a child, this participant did not understand why her father was absent, and his absence still bothers her now that she is an adult, although she feels that she has come to understand it better. She feels that her father's departure took away her childhood because she had to assume serious responsibilities at a very young age (e.g., care of younger siblings) to compensate for his absence, and she also missed his presence at milestone school functions, such as graduations. Children of absent fathers were common in her childhood neighborhood. When she began to date, she chose emotionally unavailable men who were like her father and reproduced the pattern of her parents' relationship. She feels that losing her father has made her more self-reliant, however, and has given her a clearer idea of what her own children need.

Participant 5

This participant found her father's absence hard as a child, and missed his presence at events and functions, particularly when she saw other children with their fathers. She coped with her father's absence while she was growing up by isolating herself. As a child she did not understand why her father was absent, but as an adult she achieved closure by realizing that her parents could not be together. As an adult she sought father figures in her romantic partners.

Participant 6

This participant felt as a child that her mother was both father and mother to her and her siblings, but she does not feel that her father's absence affected her experience of school. Fatherlessness was common among children in her neighborhood, and this made her feel better, because she was not exceptional. As an adult she came to understand fatherlessness as a normal or unexceptional condition, though she has missed her father's support and advice, particularly with respect to relationships. She feels that her father's absence has taught her to be independent.

Participant 7

This participant's childhood was characterized by loneliness and confusion that resulted from her father's departure. She did not want to work in school, and the loss of the family's only transportation provider had the effect of isolating her and her siblings from other children. She had been very close to her father before he left, so she found his absence devastating, and felt that she experienced depression because of it. As an adult she understands that his departure was due to his trying to cope with mental illnesses; due to these same issues, he died by suicide when she was 20 years old. She learned from her father's absence to appreciate her family members while they are in her life.

Participant 8

The absence of this participant's father made her mother more aggressive and strict with her and her siblings, and she felt lonely after his departure, although she does not feel that his absence influenced her experience of school. Her childhood family lived in a rural area and had no immediate neighbors. She felt that her mother helped her to understand why her father was gone when she was a child, and as an adult she feels that her own father's absence has helped her to understand the experiences of her own fatherless children and grandchildren.

Participant 9

This participant's mother worked long hours to compensate for the loss of her father's income, so she grew up with very little supervision or guidance. As a child she did not understand why her father was absent, and she went through phases when she blamed her mother or herself for his departure, but seeing other children whose fathers were absent normalized the experience for her as she grew up. She still does not understand why her father left, however, and she feels that his departure has impaired her ability to trust men. She feels she followed in her mother's footsteps, however, such that her own son's father is absent.

Participant 10

Although she did not feel that her father's departure affected her experience of her school or her neighborhood, she felt that her father's absence was hard for her to cope with as a child. She was often sad as a child, particularly when she saw other children with their fathers, but she coped by engaging with sports. She did not understand why her father was gone, but with her mother's support she learned to adapt to his absence. As an adult, she still felt emotional pain because of her father's absence, and she felt that even though she distrusted men she had been with at least one serious romantic partner who was like her father.

Participant 11

As a child this participant and her family had to make sacrifices to compensate for her father's absence, such as her mother working longer hours or the participant going to work at an unusually young age. She does not feel that her father's absence affected her school experience, but most of the children in her neighborhood lived with both parents, and her father was locally well known, so her neighborhood experience was characterized by anxiety and a desire to protect her father's reputation. As a child she blamed her father's irresponsibility for his absence at times, and at other times she felt unloved by him. When she grew into adulthood, this participant understood that his departure was due to her parents' divorce. She feels she chose the wrong men as romantic partners due to her father's absence, and she has missed having access to a loving man's perspective, particularly on the matter of relationships.

Participant 12

The absence of this participant's father caused her childhood home life to be characterized by depression and financial hardship. In school, her performance suffered because she did not have her father to help her with her work. She also missed his presence at her sporting events, which were important to her. As an adult she came to appreciate that her parents' divorce may have been for the best, because it put at an end to the violent fighting she had witnessed between them. As an adult she looked for a father-figure in her romantic partners, and she feels that this led her to make bad decisions about men. Her father's absence made her determined to ensure that her own children always had access to both of their parents.

Participant 13

This participant's childhood home life was characterized by financial hardship and by the unavailability of her mother, who had to work longer hours to compensate for the loss of her

father's income. As a child she could not understand why her father was gone, but as an adult she came to appreciate that his departure was due to his conflict with her mother. She felt that her schoolwork suffered from the lack of her father's assistance with it, and her neighborhood experience was characterized by the lack of a father-figure to assist in activities (e.g., sports) in which a father's presence was expected. She feels that her father's absence has made her a better mother to her own children, because she is able to use her father's and mother's parenting behaviors as examples of what not to do.

Participant 14

This participant's childhood was characterized by sadness, hurt, financial hardship, and the unavailability of her mother, who had to work longer hours to compensate for the loss of the father's income. She feels that her father's absence, and her mother's resulting unavailability, caused her grades in school to suffer, because she had no one at home to help her with her work. She missed her father, particularly at community events in which a father's presence was expected, or when she saw other children with their fathers. As a child she could not understand why her father was absent, and she feels that as an adult she was more vulnerable to deceptiveness in romantic partners due to her father's unreliability.

Participant 15

This participant's childhood home life was characterized by feelings of sadness and emptiness due to her father's absence, and also by the stress of the extra responsibilities she had to take on at a young age to help compensate for the family's loss of his support. As with other participants, Participant 15's mother was often unavailable, as she worked 90-hour weeks in order to compensate for the loss of the father's income. In her neighborhood this participant felt embarrassed by the tension between her own knowledge of her father's irresponsibility and her

frequent encounters with expressions of his excellent local reputation. As a child she could not understand why her father was gone, but she learned to cope with his absence by keeping active in order to stay out of the house. As an adult, she feels that she tended to seek in her romantic partners the unconditional love her father had denied her. She feels, however, that her father's absence has made her more attentive to her own children's needs, and that it has inspired her to be more available to them than either of her parents was to her.

Participant 16

This participant's childhood was characterized by longing for her father, by sadness, and by a search for a father-figure among the adult men with whom she came in contact. As a child she could not understand why her father was gone, and she feels that her performance in school was negatively affected by the loss of his guidance and firmness. She feels that not having a father to take her on social errands isolated her from other children in her neighborhood. As an adult she chose romantic partners who were like her father, and she feels that this made her vulnerable to mistreatment and abandonment.

Participant 17

When this participant was a child she felt that her father's absence was inexplicable, and she coped with her resultant feeling of loneliness by misbehaving in order to attract attention. She did not know other children whose fathers were absent, so her neighborhood and school experiences were characterized by the discomfort and depression she felt when she saw other children with their fathers. When she became an adult, her sense that her father had betrayed her caused her to push men away. She feels that she has learned the necessity of strong-mindedness from her father's absence.

Participant 18

The departure of this participant's father when she was eight years old caused her remaining family's socioeconomic status to decline abruptly from wealth to comparative poverty. Her school experience was affected by the necessity of transferring from a private to a public school, but she feels this change was to her advantage, as she had more support in the public school. The new neighborhood to which her remaining family had to move seemed unsafe, so she had little contact with neighboring children. As a child she could not understand why her father was absent, and she tended to blame herself for his departure, but as she grew up her mother helped her to understand that her experiences of longing and loneliness were normal for a girl whose father was gone. She feels that her father's absence caused her to seek father figures in her romantic partners, particularly by demanding that they provide for her as her father had before he left; this tendency frequently put her in a position of financial dependence.

Participant 19

This participant cultivated an apathetic demeanor as a child to compensate for the emotional disruptions of her father's departure, and her home experience was characterized by the perceived promiscuity of her mother. Fatherlessness was not an unusual condition for a child in her neighborhood, but her grades in school dropped after her parents separated. She further compensated for her father's absence by engaging with male peers. As an adult, she has come to terms with her father's absence by dismissing him from consideration. She reports, however, that she remains angry with him, and she feels that his abandonment of their family and failure to come to better terms with her mother were cowardly. She feels that her father's absence has made her vulnerable to abuse from romantic partners.

Participant 20

This participant's childhood home life was characterized by the depression and sadness that seemed to afflict her whole family, and her experience of her neighborhood was negatively affected by the absence of a protector. She does not feel that her father's absence was detrimental to her performance in school, but all through her life she has missed having access to the perspective of a mature and loving male. She feels that the absence of a positive male role model caused her to choose the wrong men as romantic partners, such that she herself was consequently abandoned, just as her mother had been.

Composite Summary of Participants' Experiences

Participants' lived experiences of home life were characterized by financial and emotional hardships resulting from the loss of a father's earnings and care. Most participants reported that their academic performance in school was not significantly affected by their fathers' absence, but that they missed their fathers' support in their studies and in their extracurricular activities. In their neighborhoods, participants' experiences varied, influenced by the compositions of their companions' households, such that having friends with absent fathers normalized their own condition, while observing or hearing about other children's relationships with their fathers caused envy, anger, or sadness.

Participants reported that during their childhoods they had been uncertain about what the absence of their fathers meant, and that this had resulted in confusion, longing, questioning, and (in some cases) self-blame. As adults, most participants achieved some form of closure by coming to understand their fathers' absence as a result of conflict with their mothers, of illness, or of irresponsibility, such that they were able to feel that they were not responsible for their fathers' departures. Participants reported that the absence of their fathers shaped their decision-

making patterns in romantic relationships, either by normalizing exploitative behavior in men (e.g., deception, abuse, or abandonment), or by predisposing them to distrust men. Participants were also affected in their decision-making patterns by the loss of a male perspective and a father's guidance.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 20 participants (see Appendix A for the interview guide). The researcher conducted a single interview with each participant in the researcher's office. The duration of the interviews was 60 minutes and the interviews were audio-recorded, with the participants' consent, using a digital recorder. There were no variations in data collection from the plan presented in chapter 3, and no unusual circumstances were encountered during data collection.

Data Analysis

Interview data were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and analyzed using NVivo 11 software. The analysis process was based on the phases developed by Hycner (1999). The first step, bracketing, was accomplished through the researcher's working to set aside her personal biases and preconceived ideas about the topic in preparation for the analysis of the data. Data reduction then involved reducing large chunks of data within the transcripts into smaller units of meaning (or codes), which represented the smallest units of experience of the participants.

In the second step of the analysis, the researcher delineated the units of meaning or codes by assigning labels to them, based on the prevailing meaning of the section of data coded. In the third step, the researcher clustered the delineated units of meaning into themes, based on the codes' similarities with one another. The resulting themes represented the core of the reported, lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers. The results of the fourth phase

of the analysis were reported in the demographics section of this chapter, and consisted of a summary of each participant's experience. The result of the fifth phase of the analysis—a composite description of the experience of all participants—was also given in the demographics section.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study's results was enhanced by the researcher's adherence to the procedures recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011). Credibility of the results was ensured through a process of member-checking, in which the researcher emailed participants an individual summarized report of their own interview during the analysis phase, with the instruction to provide feedback about the accuracy of the summary in capturing their lived experience. Participants recommended no changes. To enhance the transferability of the results, the researcher has provided a rich description of the methodological procedure and the research context. The researcher used audit trails to enhance dependability. The audit trails included specific information about what the researcher did at every stage of the data collection and data analysis processes. Finally, the researcher enhanced the confirmability of the study's results by practicing reflexivity, in which the researcher acknowledged elements of professional background, biases and opinions, and personal relationships that might affect the objectivity of the study.

Results

This presentation of the study's results is organized by research question. Answers related to the first research question include participants' descriptions of their lived experiences at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods. In relation to the second research question, the results indicate the perceived, essential meanings of those experiences to participants' lives.

Results related to the third and final research question indicate how participants' life struggles have shaped their decision-making patterns.

Research Question 1: What Are the Lived Experiences of Daughters with Absent Fathers at Home, in School, and in their Neighborhoods?

Sub-themes related to participants' experiences included *experiences at home*, *experiences in school*, and *experiences in neighborhoods*.

Experiences at home. Nineteen out of twenty participants described their lived experiences of living at home without a father as characterized by some form of hardship or struggle. The exception, Participant 15, indicated that the remaining members of her family had adapted and resigned themselves to the absence of her father:

> We went about our normal routine. It wasn't something that we were just like, "Daddy woulda did this if he was here. Well, daddy woulda did that if he was here." It was okay, so we all know he ain't here. We all know what roles we have to play in. (Participant 15)

Participant 15 added, however, that she had structured her childhood and adolescent activities with the goal of staying out of her home as much as possible, suggesting that her home life may also have been characterized by difficulties; this participant stated that she coped with the absence of her father by, "Doing things that keep [me] active to stay out of the house."

The remaining 19 participants provided more overtly negative descriptions of their lived experiences of being in a home without their fathers. Participant 1 spoke of struggling without adequate support and of feeling that her family fell short of a pervasive ideal:

> When I was a child, it seemed like we had to struggle for different things. We really didn't have a lot of support. It just didn't seem like a home life that I saw on TV, that's something that I wanted. It just affected the structure of us having things that we needed.

My mom had to work real hard and we really didn't have anybody else there.

(Participant 1)

Participant 2 also spoke of struggling, at first describing the challenges of living without a father as primarily afflicting her mother, but later noting that she and her siblings had been forced to assume responsibilities earlier in their lives than children with fathers at home were perceived to do:

> As a child...I saw my mom struggle a lot because she did a whole lot and my father really wasn't there, so I think it affected our home life just in the sense that we didn't have two parents to go to the activities where dads were supposed to go. My mom was always the one to go. And home was, I mean home was difficult because all we have was my mom and doing those difficult, like teenage years and as a child, she had to handle pretty much us and take care of everything. So that took a toll on us and I learned to be independent like her and help her with the dishes and help her around the house. As a young child, I think we learned to learn responsibility early. (Participant 2)

Participant 6 referred to traditional gender roles in describing the perceived makeshift character of her home and the additional responsibilities her mother was forced to take on:

> I think [my father's absence] affected the home life because the father just wasn't there to be that father figure, per se, and to be the head of the household. As we know, men should be the head of the household and control things. It was a whole lot more work on my mother because I think my other siblings felt the same way, that mom was the mother and the father because he wasn't there. The father wasn't there. I think it had a tremendous effect on the family to know that daddy wasn't in the house. (Participant 6)

Participant 8 described the hardships in her home as primarily afflicting the children, through the sternness her mother exercised to compensate for her father's absence:

> I think it made mama more aggressive with the children when dad was away. She wanted to make sure that we did the chores that we needed to, fed the animals. It was hard on us...It was just harder, he wasn't there. (Participant 8)

Participant 4 also spoke of additional responsibilities being thrust on her:

> It was very difficult. It was hard to understand the reason why [father was gone] and being a kid, it was like I was the one that had to do everything and had to take care of everything. It was just hard. Just couldn't understand why. It took away from my childhood...Because I was the one...I was the oldest girl and I was the one that had to get up five o'clock in the morning, brush my own teeth, brush they teeth, fix breakfast, do the cooking, clean the house. I just had to do it all. (Participant 4)

Participant 12 spoke of the constraining effect her father's absence had on her family's finances, saying: "I guess it made things a lot harder, financially." Participant 13 described a similar experience of financial hardship, noting the effect on her mother and on the rest of the family:

> It made things a lot more difficult because a lot of things that we went through probably didn't have to go through if he was there, such as less money, hard for mom to be at home with us, it's kind of hard because you don't have this specific time with mom because she's always working trying to make up financial obligations we probably wouldn't have to deal with if there were two incomes, meaning if dad was there. (Participant 13)

Participant 14 specifically discussed the stress associated with her family's financial hardship:

> I would say it was a lot of stress as a child. I could see my mother going through stressful things or times when she was crying because she had a lot of stress on her. Only because it's a financial obligation that's missing and a lot of things that she had to take on all by herself. So as a child you don't want to see your parents go through upsetting times and you don't ever want to see your parents cry. So I do remember it being very hurtful for her, so it was hurtful for me. (Participant 14)

Participant 16 described a sense of loss and deprivation:

> I was always the one stuck in the house, like there'd be days or birthdays where my siblings would go out with their fathers but I would never, ever go with mine. Like I was always in the house. And I would just cry, asking my mom where's my dad at? (Participant 16)

Participant 10, after stating that she adapted, out of necessity, to the absence of her father, described her experiences at home as characterized by sadness:

> [Home life after my father left] changed because I stayed sad a lot. And I couldn't understand why I was always sad, but you know, when I look at other kids having their dads there, and to do this and to do that with them, and mine wasn't there for me, so it just, I just kind of clammed up a lot. I just didn't want to be bothered a lot. (Participant 10)

Participant 2 spoke of the absence of her father as inhibiting her willingness to trust men: "It's more of a letdown as a child because once your father, the first guy that you actually fall in love with, lets you down, you can't trust a male figure after that."

Experiences in school. Participant 16 described herself as becoming undisciplined in school after her strict father's departure:

> You always have that one parent that's strict and you have to do this, you have to do that. Always stay on top of your schoolwork. And it wasn't my mum. I knew it was my dad because my mum was the nice one and the lenient one. But my dad was the strict one and "get things done" type of parent. I didn't have him so, all right, just took advantage of my mum...I didn't have to do homework. I didn't have to listen to teachers. I just wasn't very disciplined. (Participant 16)

Participant 19's school performance was also negatively affected by the departure of her father:

> I had real bad grades. My grades was all dropped after my mom and them split. After that, my grades dropped really bad. I ain't going to lie, I was doing good at first but they dropped really bad and it just put me through a lot of stuff as I got older. I started becoming of course like you said, I was still I don't care-ish, but I was also sad but I just didn't express myself to people. (Participant 19)

Participant 7 described her lived experience of school as negatively affected by depression after her father left:

> Depression. Didn't want to do my homework. Just wanted to spend time by myself...Anything I did particularly reminded me of him, because he would be the one

that would help me with my homework and the absence was really [affecting].

(Participant 7)

Participant 12 felt that the loss of her father's support affected her studies: "Not having him around during school probably would have helped if he was around. Because then I'd have someone to help me with my homework. Or you know help me with certain school projects." Participant 13 also felt that her father's absence negatively affected her academic performance:

I didn't have help in school studying, there are difficult subjects that I probably had like math and science, I didn't like too much. When I had certain science fair projects coming up because mom worked so much or because mom was out of the house doing other obligations for the household, I didn't have anybody to help me with projects and stuff like that. But in school it was hard. (Participant 13)

Participant 2 speculated that her father's absence may have improved her and her siblings' academic performance:

Academics was always really important to us and going through elementary school and high school, we was always overachievers and grades were really important to us. I don't know if him not being there affected that or maybe we put a lot...into our academics and doing good and making sure we made As and Bs, maybe so my father could see and see how good we're doing and want to be around or want to come around or just be there. (Participant 2)

Participant 4 missed her father's support at school functions: "it was like all the functions I wanted him to be there for he just wasn't there and it was hard but I learned to deal with it." Participant 3 missed her father's support at her sporting events, but felt that his absence did not affect her grades:

I can't really say it affected my school life, more or less. The only thing like I said it

affected was, you know ... I play basketball and I ran track so I think missing him at

those events was probably the most way it affected my school life. It really didn't as far

as my studies. (Participant 3)

Participant 11 said that the effects of her father's absence on her experience of school

were social, rather than academic:

I guess it affected it because most of my friends have two parents in their house. I guess

it affected it because I felt like I was looked at differently or not as. Most of my friends

in school basically had better cars, better clothes. Education-wise it was I don't know. It

was pretty normal. It wasn't too bad. I can't say that I got bad grades because he wasn't

there. I can't say that I got good grades because he wasn't there. (Participant 11)

Participant 1 reported experiences similar to those of Participants 3 and 11, in the sense

that she did not feel her academic performance was affected by her father's absence. Participant

1 said:

I don't really think having an absent father affected my school life. It would've been

probably good to have him there, being that I had my mom there, but it really didn't

affect me. I still did what I needed to do in school. (Participant 1)

Experiences in neighborhoods. Participant 11 discussed how her father's local

notability made his absence awkward for her to address when she spoke with her neighbors:

Because so many people knew who my dad was, and I looked like him so much, they

would always ask me how he's doing or where is he, how's he feeling, have you talked to

him. It's kind of hard because I don't talk to him. I don't know how he's doing. You can't

really say that because you don't want to make him look bad. (Participant 11)

For Participant 14, the occurrence of community events in which a father's participation was expected caused her to feel a sense of loss: "It was hard because we were involved in after school programs and community activities. It's kind of hard when you see all your friends' fathers participating in things that they're doing and your father's not there." Participant 16 isolated herself to avoid other children's conversations about their fathers:

> It was hard because we were involved in after school programs and community activities. It's kind of hard when you see all your friends' fathers participating in things that they're doing and your father's not there...I just didn't go outside much because when I did, where we lived there were a lot of single mums and single parents, so it was always, when we got time to go outside and play, they would talk about what they did with their dads and all this other stuff. I wasn't allowed to experience what I got to do with my dad. I wasn't allowed to tell anyone, like be excited and tell anyone what I got to do with my dad...So I just, more so, decided to stay inside. (Participant 16)

For Participant 15, isolation seemed prudent due to the absence of a protector: "Normally, you would have your dad there to protect you from certain things. By me not having mine, it wasn't okay for me to go outside." Participant 20 also described her neighborhood experiences as characterized by the lack of a protector:

> When you got picked on you know or bullied you'd normally go to a male figure to protect you. And by me not having anyone to run home to...it's the same as when I'm playing outside. Or outside with a couple friends and all of a sudden a certain somebody we don't know or even one of my friends decide to bother me or pick with me in a way like you want to have a male figure to run to to protect you. Because that is who I was

taught who is supposed to protect you. That's who's supposed to keep harm from your

way. (Participant 20)

Participant 17 reported that the hardest aspect of her experience of her neighborhood was,

Watching others with their fathers and seeing them go for walks, or seeing them have

family functions and their dad arriving and popping up, it was hard to watch I guess you

could say...The fact that no one else's dad was absent from them, or missing from their

life, or if they were missing it was because he was chose to leave it wasn't because it was

something that he couldn't help. (Participant 17)

For Participant 1, seeing other children with their fathers was difficult, but the absence of

her father did not make her unusual among the children in her neighborhood:

Well, in my neighborhood, it was kind of the norm to see not a lot of fathers around.

Like I said before, it made me sad when I did have friends that had a father that would

be around and they would be playing with them and I would always want to have that

attention or I'd try to get that attention from their father so they could play with me

because I didn't have a man around to play with and to be with me. (Participant 1)

Participant 6's experience of her neighborhood was also influenced by the relationships

other children had with their fathers, but in her case this effect was neutral:

I don't think it had too much effect in the neighborhood because there was other

households in the same situation. It was just a mom and the children. They was just

being raised by their mother and grandparents. The grandparents were around and, we

again, looked to them as mom and dad. (Participant 6)

Participant 4 also reported that the prevalence of homes with absent fathers in her

neighborhood made her experience easier:

I had a lot of kids around me that didn't have fathers. It's just like we all got together and

just had fun with each other because we knew what was going on. We just dealt with

each other in that way. We didn't talk about it. We just went on with our lives.

(Participant 4)

Research Question 2: What Are the Essential Meanings of These Experiences to the

Daughters' Lives as Children and as Adults?

Sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of data related to the second research

question included participants' descriptions of *essential meanings during childhood*, *essential*

meanings during adulthood, and *important understandings*.

Essential meanings during childhood. Participants reported experiencing confusion

during their childhoods about what the absence of their fathers meant. For Participant 9, the

meaning of her father's absence was unclear, and the result was confusion and questioning:

I probably went through a phase, maybe thinking maybe something my mom did, or

maybe he just didn't want me, or different little reasons that you try to come up with.

Until you see other people who don't have fathers and you say ... you begin to think that

that's okay. It's like, that's the way it is. (Participant 9)

Participant 10 reported a sense of confusion and questioning similar that of Participant 9,

but in her case this sense was accompanied by an intuition of wrongness:

I always wondered why he wasn't there. And I never understood why he wasn't there.

But I know when I was younger, it was just, I could tell that something wasn't right. I

just couldn't figure out what it was. (Participant 10)

Participant 12 also reported a sense of loss and questioning about the meaning of her

father's absence: "You don't as a child. You don't understand it. You don't know why they're not

there. You don't quite get it. You just know they're not there." Participant 13 joined Participants 9, 10, and 12 in expressing a sense of confusion, and added that for her this experience came with a feeling of sadness:

> I don't know. I guess it was difficult, only because when dads aren't around, especially females, when dads aren't around it's kind of sad and difficult because you got to realize as a young child you don't really understand why they're not there. (Participant 13)

For Participant 14, the absence of her father during her childhood meant trying to make as much sense of her circumstances as she could:

> You really don't understand the fact that he's absent because you know you spend a lot of time asking the why's and the where's and the when's. Which are why isn't he here? Where is he? And then is he coming back?...you don't understand, you try to just deal with it and you try to make sense of what it is, the best that you can. So I think that's pretty much, you can't really say you understand it as a child, because you really don't. (Participant 14)

Participant 3 did her best to make sense of her father's absence until she began as an adolescent to understand why he might have gone:

> I really don't think I understood as a child. I think more or less in my teenage years is when I really started understanding. As a child, my mom did her best try and keep him active in my life with, "Well, your dad called," or, "Well, your dad came by. Dropped some stuff off." She still tried to make him relevant as a younger child, but I really don't think I understood it until I grew up. (Participant 3)

For Participant 4, her father's absence had no apparent, understandable meaning, but her circumstances compelled her to reserve her attention for practical matters:

It was very difficult. I missed out on a lot. Missed out on being loved and just having

him there for what I needed him there for...I didn't understand it. Really I didn't make

sense of it but I just dealt with it in a way that I could deal with it because I knew I had

to go on. I had to just keep going. I had to be strong for my sisters. I knew I had to do

what I had to do for them and my mom. (Participant 4)

For Participant 1, the absence of her father meant resolving her confusion about the cause

of his departure with self-blame:

I would say not having my father as a child, I was sad. I missed out on a lot of things

that I saw a lot of my other friends doing having their father around. It really just wasn't

a good childhood...As a child, I really didn't understand why he wasn't there. It made me

think was it something that I did, is it something that I could've did different. My mom

never really talked about why he wasn't there, so it was hard to understand and to even

think about. I just knew he wasn't there and maybe I could've been the blame for it. I

really didn't know. (Participant 1)

Participant 18 also resolved her confusion with self-blame as a child:

I didn't understand it. It was really hard for me to understand. I didn't know. I would

wonder, "What's going on? Why is this happening? Where is my dad?" Again, I would

blame myself. Maybe it was because of me. Maybe it was because of them having me

that, we're starting to get where they are and maybe because I'm getting older, that's why

things got really rocky. (Participant 18)

For Participant 16, lacking a father meant searching for a father:

I was like always sad and I always wanted my dad to be around so I would always hang

around the male figures in my life so I could feel like I had a dad. And I would always

go around my sister and her dad so that I could feel like I was a part of a whole family

instead of just having a mum and no dad at all. (Participant 16)

Participant 11 also missed her father's love:

As a child, you don't really know that [things happen between adults]. You just feel like

somebody just walked away. You're less loved or just didn't want to be there to take care

of you or wasn't ready for that responsibility that came with being in love with

somebody...Every child wants their mom and dad to stay together and to be together. I

guess, it was sad because I only had my mom. As a child, you've got to have love and

you go through childhood looking for love from mom and dad. I get it from my mom all

day long. I'm missing something and obviously it was the love from my dad. That's I

think that's the hardest part. (Participant 11)

The departure of Participant 7's father afflicted her with a profound sense of loss, which

caused her to feel, "Lonely. Real lonely. He was there and then he wasn't...I didn't [make sense

of it]...I was close to him and stayed away from the other siblings. [I] just missed his presence. I

still do...I was his shadow."

Essential meanings during adulthood. Participants reported that they achieved a sense

of closure when they grew into adulthood. Participants came to understand why their fathers had

been absent, either in a way that allowed them to excuse or at least understand his departure (as

in the cases of Participants 3 and 7) or in a way that allowed them to assign blame for the

abandonment to their fathers, rather than to themselves (as in the case of Participant 19).

Participant 3 learned when she reached adulthood that her father had been struggling with a

serious illness:

I understand it more so now….My dad basically, what I know now, what I didn't understand then, is that he was dealing with a illness. He was dealing with multiple sclerosis, so it limited him a lot then, and it limit him a lot more now. As I grew up, I kind of understood but to me it still wasn't something that should've kept him from me as a child. (Participant 3)

Participant 7 said she was,

Realizing now that things were going on...because he was depressed and unstable in his life...He was sick, but nobody knew it. He kept it to himself until it came to the point where he killed hisself...he committed suicide when I was 20 and my father was like a best friend to me and even today at 60 years old, it still hurts a lot, missing him since '76. (Participant 7)

Participant 11 realized that her parents simply could not be together:

I now understand that it wasn't that he didn't want to be there. It was more or less because mom and dad got a divorce, so they just weren't together. It wasn't that he didn't want to not raise us or not deal with us, because as an adult I know know, because know it's different. You understand a lot of things as an adult differently than you do as a child. Divorce happens. (Participant 11)

Participant 13 also realized that her father's departure was due to conflict between her parents:

I understand now that it wasn't like he just took off, and ran, and left his obligations behind. It was like he just took off and said, "I don't want to deal with this. I don't want to deal ... I don't love her. I don't love my children." It wasn't anything like that, it's very obvious now as an adult, like you see things that people go through in their relationships

and you kind of understand either it works or it doesn't work...Some people work on it

better when they're separate. (Participant 13)

For Participant 19, closure came from blaming her father:

Now it's just forget that man. For real for real...because I felt like he could have been

man enough to fix the stuff with my mom. I feel like he could have been man enough to

show her something different in her life and now I'm just like, I just don't talk to him. I

don't really bang with my dad. I don't like my dad. I'm mad as heck with him.

(Participant 19)

Participant 20 achieved closure by attributing her father's departure to what she saw as a

typically masculine attitude toward paternal responsibility:

I understand that you know men have different mentalities than women, so they think

different. The easiest thing for them to do is run. And there's nothing I can do about

it...Meaning they think different than women. Most women feel the need as if they have

to stay with their kids. Others or some women also they can run away from their

problems just as well as men but you mostly see men running than you do women.

Because they think different, their emotions are different, they have a different way of

dealing with things. (Participant 20)

Important understandings. For Participant 3, the abstract meaning or lesson of having

an absent father was that she needed to be self-reliant:

Love yourself before you allow anybody else to love you. Nobody else can love you the

way you love yourself or the way you would want them to love you unless you love

yourself wholeheartedly, inside and out, flaws and all. Accept yourself for who you are.

Don't look for validation from anyone else. (Participant 3)

Participant 4 also spoke of the lesson of self-reliance and strength as an abstract meaning of her father's absence: "The most important thing is even though he's not there, you know you got to be strong and you know you got to go." Participant 6 had taken from her father's absence the lesson that she needed to be strong and strive:

> I would like to add and say that for those that have or had an absent father in their life, to never think less of yourself. Keep your head up. Build up your faith and confidence in yourself, in you. Know that you're able to do the things that you want to do. Strive for the best. Not let that be a hinder in your life, but continue to strive for the best and in your family, as you grow older, try to do things in the right way. (Participant 6)

Participant 10 also took from her father's absence the lesson that she needed to be strong in spite of her pain:

> When he's not there, just maintain and be strong, even though it hurts, even through it bothers you. Just remember, you have to be strong for your kids. You have to be strong for whoever's around you. You want to set an example. And one thing that my mother always told me, never let anything bring me down, even though you might feel bad, just keep your head up and keeping going. (Participant 10)

The meaning Participant 12 took from her father's absence was the importance of co-parenting:

> I guess when you know when the two parents are separated or the two parents are not in the household with the child it's best that they have an equal understanding or communication line open with their children so that they don't ... you know co-parenting is very important when it comes to children if they're going to be separate or away from the children. (Participant 12)

For Participant 16, the meaning of her father's absence was that she needed to draw strength from the people who remained around her:

> You have family that, besides your father, are there. You have people that could take you under your wing. It's all on whether you choose to listen or not, or choose to go in that direction with whoever can take you under your wing or not. (Participant 16)

Participant 13 derived from her father's absence a definite idea of what a parent should be:

> I think the most important thing is really just trying to understand that I've altered my parenting as a mom in order to fit the things that my mom wasn't able to do or conquer and what my dad never did. So when I say that I mean I don't want my children to pretty much have to deal with what I did with an absent father, even though their father and I aren't together, they still have the attention, they still have the obligation, that he has an obligation, that he lets him know that he loves them, he has a very good relationship with them. (Participant 13)

Participant 9 learned from her mother's avoidance of the subject of her father's absence the importance of communicating with her own children:

> I think the fact that when you're young, and you don't have an answer, you come up with your own answer and sometimes that can be the thing that really hurts you. Because it's very important, and sometimes parents don't understand that what their kids are thinking, or what they answers they have to come up with, so it's important that they take time to listen or even ask questions. (Participant 9)

Research Question 3: How Do the Life Struggles of Daughters with Absent Fathers Shape Their Life Decision-Making Patterns?

Participants reported that their fathers' absence had affected their decision-making in *relationships*, either by causing them to partner with the wrong men, or by making them distrustful of men. Participants also described the effects that *missing guidance* from a father had on their decision-making patterns.

Relationships. The absence of a male model for what a partner should be caused Participant 1 to make bad decisions about men:

It affected my decision-making in relationships, as I said, choosing the wrong man, the wrong boy, looking for love in all the wrong places, giving up things to a person and they really didn't deserve it. That was a bad decision on my part and I think if I had a dad around to show me what's it like to have love from a man, then I wouldn't have went through so many bad relationships and made poor decisions in people. (Participant 1)

Participant 2 also felt that her decision-making about men had been negatively affected by her father's absence:

Not having my father, I feel like that impacted a lot of how the relationship went because I didn't have a positive man in my life to show me that example of what a man, how a man should treat me. (Participant 2)

Her father's absence affected Participant 3's decision-making by causing her to jump into intimacy prematurely:

The first example would be having children and having sex before marriage. I take it back to there because when I started dating, I started looking for love that I didn't get at

home from my dad. So I'm looking for a male figure to give me the kind of love that I

was missing, which started me having children. (Participant 3)

Participant 4 attached herself to men whose emotional unavailability reflected her

father's absence:

[My first relationship] wasn't a steady relationship. He was just in and out. I was looking

for love, but he wasn't. Then I had another relationship where as there was a lot of

fighting because my mom and dad went through a lot of that so it's like I was choosing

men in the relationship of what my dad was. (Participant 4)

Participant 12 spoke about the psychological mechanism that was at work when she

sought a father-figure in potential romantic partners:

I probably wouldn't have been as boy crazy [if my father had stayed]...my self-esteem as

far as looking for love in all the wrong places I guess. Or liking the attention you got

from guys that noticed you. Not realizing it's not the right attention...It's almost like you

build your father into different guys, you know? Like he's a great provider or he loves

the woman he's with or he does the yard work without having to be asked. He takes out

the trash, he opens all the doors, he pays for dinner. You know those are the father-

builders that you look for in different guys. And I think that's what I ended up doing.

(Participant 12)

Participant 14 referred explicitly to the search for a father-figure in a mate: "I'll say [my

father's absence] affected me with men. I'll say picking the wrong mate, picking the wrong father

figure for my children and just picking the wrong men period." The absence of Participant 15's

father made her vulnerable to deception and abuse:

I married somebody who was abusive and that was me marrying the wrong mate...So, I was looking for this love, and at one point he was giving me love, and then being abusive and then saying the I'm sorrys and everything is going to be okay and I promise I won't do it again, and then here comes the lies. Then my father used to lie to me also. So, I'm thinking it's okay because this is what my father did. (Participant 15)

The absence of Participant 14's father also made her vulnerable to deceptive men:

Men lie a lot, they let you down. So basically your decision-making is affected because if dad's not there because he's lied to you or because he said "I'll do this." You remember that stuff. So a lot of the times when a guy that you're dating says "Okay, I'll be there. I'm never going to let you down." The first thing we're going to think of is okay, 'cause you really want to believe that but then once they start letting you down and they start lying to you, it goes right back to when your father did that same thing. So now your decision making process has been affected because now you're going to be picking the wrong people. (Participant 14)

Participant 16's absent father made her vulnerable to abandonment by romantic partners:

I always chose the ones that would always leave. I always chose the ones that would never stick around, but that's just because that's something I was used to. And I would let them. And I would let them come back when they chose to. Because I don't understand how I'm supposed to choose them and how they're supposed to treat me...The way I was treated wasn't the right way, and I knew that. But I still, like I said, never had anyone male and show me how I was supposed to be treated and how I was supposed to be talked to. (Participant 16)

The absence of Participant 9's father had an effect on her that was contrary to the effect of paternal absence on some of the participants quoted above. While previously quoted responses have indicated a propensity to trust men too much, Participant 9 felt unable to trust men at all:

> I think not having a male role model growing up affects your ability to be like to trust men in your relationships as far as some of the decisions that you make as far as when you decide to date male individuals. Like the sayings say that your father teaches you, who you look for in a man, and whereas I didn't have that. (Participant 9)

Participant 10 reported an effect on her decision-making similar to that reported by Participant 9:

> When I had my first boyfriend, it was hard. That didn't work out, because he reminded me of my dad. And then my second boyfriend I had, it was a struggle, because it was hard for me to trust a man, because I figured when they come into my life, how long were they gonna be in my life. And I didn't want to take any of my kids through that. (Participant 10)

Missing guidance. For Participant 2, the absence of her father's support and guidance affected her, not just in her relationships with men, but in all her decision-making:

> Having an absent father, it just made me go through a lot of bad mistakes that I probably could have not went through, relationships with men, choosing the wrong people, looking for love in the wrong places. Those type of struggles that I really probably didn't have to go through if I had a male there to show me what it was to be loved. I had a child when I was young and I think that affected ... That was a reason why I had a child when I was younger because I didn't have a dad around. (Participant 1)

Participant 2 stated, "I don't think I made a lot of decisions based off of my father not being there," but went on to say:

> I think as my life struggles, it affects it a lot because when you're going through hard times and you've made bad decisions relationship-wise, money-wise, things like that, you only have that one parent to look for help, assistance, guidance, or whatever. Now I look back on it, I'm like, you know my dad, my dad wasn't really there but it could've been a whole lot better if I could have him to depend on. (Participant 2)

Participant 4 also missed the guidance she might have received if her father had remained in her life:

> [My father's absence] really affected me because once I started going through things and dealing with things, it's like I had to make my own decision about things besides having somebody to give me a direction. I had to give my own self a direction. (Participant 4)

Participant 11 explained how as an adult she had missed the perspective of a loving male, saying that this had influenced her decision-making by leaving her with a more limited outlook:

> There are certain things in life that as an adult you go through and I can honestly say when I was struggling with my marriage, it was hard because I can get my mom's advice and she's going to be biased because I'm her daughter. You know what I'm saying? She's a female, and I'm a female. It was hard to not have my dad's advice because he's a male. I couldn't really understand it from a male's perspective. What was I doing wrong? What could I have done differently, things of that nature...I'll take my marriage. It ended in divorce. You know what I'm saying? Not understanding a male's perspective when it comes to marriage. I have always thought that I was always doing the right thing and

sometimes it gets to the point where I don't know what else to do. I can't talk to my

father to see what else I could do. (Participant 11)

Participant 18 also experienced the loss of her father's perspective as a detriment to her

decision-making:

Not having a male perspective on life and how, of course, certain things should be and

no male to actually talk to because we weren't close with our grandparents and we

weren't close with her brothers or his brothers and sisters and stuff like that. (Participant

18)

Participant 20 particularly missed having her father's input on the men she met:

Having a second opinion on things that I wanted it on. Versus always just the one,

versus my mom, which matters a lot. But I mean you also want to be able to have your

parent's other opinion...Meaning like what would he think of the men I brought home?

What would he think of the people I've dealt with and the woman I've become today. Is

it a pat on the back or is it more so I need more improvement or is it a he's not the right

one for you. Or is it he should treat you a little better or you know just stuff like that. Or

you shouldn't have to buy that or you shouldn't have to pay for that. Or you shouldn't

have to go through what you're going through with men or things are general or certain

outings and stuff like that. (Participant 20)

Participant 15 described how her father's absence affected her decision-making by

causing her to feel that she was incomplete:

I'm saying like the love that my dad didn't give me as a child is what was missing whole

time. You become a complete and whole person when you get what you need from your

mother and your father. You are not a complete and whole person when you're missing

something from one of those parents. For me, it was a missing relationship with my

male father, with my friend. I didn't have the love. I didn't have the strength. I didn't

have ... You know what I'm saying? The support from that side. So, I went and look for

it somewhere else. (Participant 15)

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived

experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects on them as adults at

home, in school, in their neighborhoods, and in their decision-making processes. Data were

collected through in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 20 adult daughters of

fathers who became absent due to divorce. Three research questions were used to guide the

study. The first research question was: What are the lived experiences of daughters with absent

fathers at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods? Results indicated that participants' lived

experiences of home life were characterized by financial and emotional hardships resulting from

the loss of a father's earnings and care. Most participants reported that their academic

performance in school was not significantly affected by their fathers' absence, but that they

missed their fathers' support in their studies and in their extracurricular activities. In their

neighborhoods, participants' experiences were influenced by the compositions of their

companions' households, such that having friends with absent fathers normalized their own

condition, while observing or hearing about other children's relationships with their fathers

caused envy, anger, or sadness.

The second research question was: What are the essential meanings of these experiences

to the daughters' lives as children and as adults? Participants reported that during their

childhoods they had been confused about what the absence of their fathers meant, and that this

had resulted in confusion, longing, questioning, and (in some cases) self-blame. As adults, most participants achieved some form of closure by coming to understand their fathers' absence as a result of conflict with their mothers, illness, or irresponsibility, such that they were able to feel that they were not responsible for their fathers' departures. The abstract meanings or lessons that participants derived from having absent fathers included the importance of being independent, of appreciating the people who remained with them, and of making a better life for their own children, either by choosing a mate who would be a committed father or by helping their children to come to terms with the man's absence.

The third research question was: How do the life struggles of daughters with absent fathers shape their life decision-making patterns? Participants reported that the absence of their fathers shaped their decision-making patterns in romantic relationships, either by normalizing exploitative behavior in men (e.g., deception, abuse, or abandonment), or by predisposing them to distrust men. Participants were also affected in their decision-making patterns by the loss of a male perspective and a father's guidance. Chapter 5 includes interpretations and implications of these results.

Chapter 5

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a phenomenological account of the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects of paternal absence on the participants' experiences at home, in their neighborhoods, at school, and in their decision-making processes. The study addresses a gap in the literature with regards to the effects of having an absent father on adult daughters' decision-making processes.

The study was guided by three central research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of daughters who had absent fathers at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods?

2. What are the essential meanings of these experiences to the daughters' lives as children and as adults?

3. How do the life struggles of daughters who had absent fathers shape their life decision-making patterns?

The results of the 20 phenomenological interviews indicated that participants' lived experiences of home life featured financial and emotional hardships due to the loss of a father's earnings and parenting. As for school experiences, most participants said that their academic performance in school was not significantly affected by their fathers' absence, but that they missed their fathers' support in their studies and extracurricular activities. In their neighborhoods, participants were affected by the family structures of other children in the neighborhood, where having friends who also had absent fathers normalized their own experiences, but seeing other children from two-parent households or interacting with their fathers caused feelings of jealousy, anger, or sadness.

What follows is an in-depth discussion of these findings, with attention given as well to the limitations of the study and wider applications of results.

Interpretation of the Findings

With regards to the first research question, 'What are the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods?' the study found that participants' home lives were characterized by financial and emotional hardships, and while academic performance in school was not significantly or adversely affected by their fathers' absence, participants did miss their fathers' support in their studies and extracurricular activities. Participants described growing up in homes that were financially strained due to subsisting on only the mother's income, which was stressful not only in terms of lack of money, but because they watched their mothers struggle with the strain of working so hard to be the sole provider for the family. Participants had to learn to "do without" both materially and with respect to the limited parental support with a mother who often had to work too much and be away from the home. Participants also described having to "grow up too soon" in the sense of having to assume more responsibilities around the house since their mothers were always working, such as help with the cleaning or cooking, or helping to care for younger siblings. DeBell (2008) discussed the role of father absence in childhood on adult daughters' income levels, career development, educational performance, and self-efficacy, but the present study adds the perspectives of daughters reflections on growing up in a single mother household.

This is significant in terms of Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory as well as Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, as these findings contribute the perspective of the remaining social environment of a household with an absent father. Both theories underscore the role of social interaction and observation on the development of emotional reactions, behaviors,

and relationships with others. Baker (2014) and Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) for example demonstrated a link between ecological factors and parental characteristics on child development, which taken in conjunction with the theories of Vygotsky and Bandura may indicate a link between the ecological environment of a single-parent home and development of daughters with absent fathers, which bears further investigation in future studies. All told, given the recurring theme that emerged regarding participants' observations of overworked mothers, and accompanying increased household responsibility on the part of the daughters, social learning theory together and social development theory contribute an understanding of the lived experiences, behavioral patterns, and attitudes of women whose fathers were absent while growing up. A lack of sufficient interaction with more knowledgeable others (e.g., a father figure) could be associated with more difficult lived experiences and life outcomes compared to children who grew up with both parents present, as could the constant observation of a mother straining to carry the weight of an entire family on her own.

In school, some participants reported behavioral problems or depressive feelings that made them unmotivated to try to succeed academically, but the present study was unable to corroborate the findings of a significant number of past research pointing to the negative effect of father absence on academic performance (c.f., Baker, 2014; Kalmijn, 2015; Mackey & Mackey, 2012; Marissa & Ishaaq, 2012; Mungai, 2012; Pruett et al., 2009). This could simply be because the present study did not include specific measures of or focus on academic achievement per se, which sets it apart from, for example, the results of Marissa and Ishaaq (2012), Mungai (2012), and Kalmijn (2015), and Mackey and Mackey (2012), which all found that low levels of father involvement were associated with low levels of academic performance, and high levels of father involvement were associated with high levels of academic achievement. Specifically,

Mackey and Mackey (2012) found that a father's presence in the home makes it more likely that his child will graduate from high school and reach higher levels of educational attainment, and Baker (2014) also supported the finding that children with present fathers progressed further academically.

An additional possible explanation for the failure of the current study to replicate previous findings that academic performance is linked to a father presence and involvement could be that only two of the studies referenced in chapter two specifically assessed this effect in daughters (Marissa & Ishaaq, 2012; Mungai, 2012). In fact, Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) for example, which found that the father's educational achievement and involvement positively predicted children's grade point average, exclusively measured male high school students. Additionally, the present research relied on participants' own perspectives of their academic performance, but their actual academic performance was not verified. It is possible that these participants *perceived* that having an absent father did not affect their academic performance, but in reality it is impossible to know for certain in this context, as academic performance and perception were not corroborated.

The present study does conform to past findings that demonstrate fathers influence academic skills and attitudes of their daughters. Pruett et al. (2012) and Mungai (2012) found regarding students' academic motivation and perceived value of academic performance and education, namely that paternal academic support affects children's study habits and motivation. Participants in the current study did report feelings of lack of motivation to study associated with depression, but the strongest negative impact of having an absent father was the social aspect of seeing classmates with two parents at school events, or missing the support of their fathers in extracurricular activities like sporting events.

Similarly, participants' lived experiences in their neighborhoods was dependent on the other households in the neighborhood, where having friends who also had absent fathers normalized the experience, but seeing other children's relationships with their fathers caused feelings of envy, anger, or sadness. Participants who lived in neighborhoods where most households had two parents reported feeling jealous seeing their friends play with their fathers, and even feeling isolated or withdrawn in the absence of a male protector figure. Even seeing two parent families in television programs made some participants feel as though there was an image of an ideal family model that they were missing out on. Participants who lived in neighborhoods where absent fathers were more the norm, however, reported feeling comfortable playing with friends who had similar experiences because there was a shared understanding of having similar family backgrounds.

In their lived experiences, both in the neighborhood and at school, participants underscored the importance of the social environment with regards to the composition of friends' and peers' families. This is again significant in terms of social learning theory and social development theory, as they explain not only children's social development and learning, but also how children relate to the world through social interaction. In chapter two, I addressed how these theories help to explain how an absence of positive social interaction and influence from the father leaves children worse off than those who have regular social interaction with their fathers; as a part of this explanation, social development can be hindered if a child's father is uninvolved. In addition, the current findings also suggest that non-parental others play significant roles in the lived experiences of daughters who had absent fathers.

According to participants, social others who played significant roles in their lived experiences, specifically at home and in the neighborhood, were their friends and classmates, and

in some cases the fathers of friends and classmates. Daughters who grew up in neighborhoods where it was more common to have an absent father reported feeling that their experiences were normalized, and that it was easier to play with friends who also had absent fathers because there was an underlying shared understanding that "this is just the way things are." When confronted with school events that classmates' fathers attended, however, or for those daughters who grew up in neighborhoods where most children came from two-parent households, they reported feeling more isolated and as though there was an ideal family model that their own did not live up to. With regards to social development theory in particular, Vygotsky holds that individual development can only be understood within the cultural and social context in which it takes place. A combination of learning and social interaction work together to produce higher cognitive processes, which would not be possible without the necessary social processes involved in learning. In this case, depending on the social environment of their neighborhoods or schools, daughters with absent fathers took cues from the types of families that surrounded them in their own lived experiences of growing up with an absent father. Self-in-relation theory is also worth mentioning in light of this interpretation, where women in particular define their self through important connections with others (Surrey, 1985).

The current findings with respect to the negative emotional impact of paternal absence are well situated within the existing literature that demonstrates the negative influence of father absence on children's social and emotional health (c.f. Najam & Kausar, 2012; Pruett et al., 2012). Najam and Kausar's (2012) study exploring the association between paternal involvement and the social and emotional adjustment of adolescents found that when fathers were more involved in their children's lives, adolescents displayed less hostility, dependency, depressive symptoms, feelings of inadequacy, negative self-esteem, emotional unresponsiveness, and

showed a more positive worldview compared to adolescents whose fathers were uninvolved in their lives (Najam & Kauser, 2012). Pruett et al. (2012) also found that paternal involvement fostered social and emotional well-being, which fits with the current study's findings that daughters with absent fathers reported feelings of depression, withdrawal, lack of paternal support, and envy of their peers. The present study contributes an added layer to the existing literature, however, by demonstrating the extent to which the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers are contextualized by the social and demographic environments of their schools and neighborhoods, illustrating the importance of social development theory and social learning theory in the participants' lived experiences.

The second research question this study posed was: What are the essential meanings of these experiences to the daughters' lives as children and as adults? Participants reported that during their childhoods they had been confused about what the absence of their fathers meant, and that this had resulted in confusion, longing, questioning, and (in some cases) self-blame. This supports the findings of Lopez et al. (2012), who also found that children with absent fathers were not able to understand why their fathers were absent, and who experienced a longing for that type of paternal figure and relationship.

As adults, most participants achieved some form of closure by coming to understand their fathers' absence as a result of conflict with their mothers, illness, or irresponsibility, such that they were able to feel that they were not responsible for their fathers' departures. With regards to perceptions of their fathers' absence as a result of conflict with their mothers, the present study supports the findings of Holland and McElwain (2013) and Werneck et al. (2014), where marital quality is tied to father-child relationships.

In terms of the third research question, "How do the life struggles of daughters who had absent fathers shape their life decision-making patterns?" participants reported that the absence of their fathers shaped their decision-making patterns in romantic relationships, either by normalizing exploitative behavior in men (e.g., deception, abuse, or abandonment), or by predisposing them to distrust men. These findings contribute to existing studies linking father-daughter relationships and romantic or sexual behaviors, but highlight the role of decision-making, which has previously been lacking. DeBell (2008) for example found that gender roles exhibited in adult daughters' lives were impacted by growing up with absent fathers. The current study contributes that participants reported jumping into intimacy too quickly, choosing emotionally unavailable partners, or seeking out a father-figure in their mates. Some found themselves vulnerable to deceptive partners, or those who would later abandon them. This is significant because the existing literature focuses on the role of father absence as related specifically to sexual behavior and risk-taking (c.f., Alleyne-Green et al., 2015; Manlove et al., 2012), but does not delve as much into the role of father absence in partner choice, for example. Indeed, having an absent father has been shown to normalize weak relationships and result in more negative relationships, including participation in adultery (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, 2012; Surrey, 1985).

The present study departs significantly from past research into the sexual behavior of adult daughters with absent fathers in that it simply does not specifically address this area. Low quality paternal relationships are shown to be associated with decreased marital intimacy, satisfaction, and increased insecurity (Baggett et al., 2015; Haaza et al., 2014), and father absence is also associated with earlier age of marriage and child rearing (Sheppard et al., 2014). Further, Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2012) and Hutchinson (2011) documented the influence of

paternal relationships and communication with adolescent sexual behavior, such that stronger paternal relationships and better father-child communication was associated with less sexual behavior and sexual risk taking in adolescents. While the present study did address the fact that participants attributed poor decision-making with respect to romantic partners to growing up without a father, none mentioned specific instances of earlier age of marriage or child rearing, sexual risk taking, or dating violence, although these variables, in their specificity, did lie outside the initial scope of this study.

Participants were also affected in their decision-making patterns by the loss of a male perspective and a father's guidance, expressing a desire for guidance in terms of financial matters or the men they dated, for example. Some felt "incomplete" in this sense, or had to learn to become more self-reliant, which is interesting because it has also been shown that father involvement positively influences daughters' self-efficacy (DeBell, 2008). Indeed, Sarwar and Azmat (2013) and Liu et al. (2015) illustrated the critical role of fathers in shaping their children's career identity and development, for example.

Limitations of the Study

As noted in chapter one, two limitations of the study relating to the generalizability of the results include that the results may not be transferable to all contexts that involve daughters with absent fathers (for example, daughters with absent fathers as a result of death or incarceration, as the data exclude these instances), and the fact that a common critique of qualitative research in general is a lack of overall generalizability due to small sample sizes.

In an effort to ensure the trustworthiness and dependability of the study, the researcher adhered to the procedures recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011), namely member checks and the process of reflexivity with regards to the researcher's own professional and

personal background. As a result of member-checking, in which the researcher emailed participants an individual summarized report of their own interview with the instruction to provide feedback about the accuracy of the summary in capturing their lived experience, participants recommended no changes. The sampling, assessment, and measurement procedures were each reported accordingly and with transparency, ensuring that the study was carried out ethically and properly.

While the small sample size allowed for a nuanced in-depth phenomenological analysis, a qualitative methodology which was found to be appropriate given the research aims and lack of measure of the lived experiences of adult daughters who grew up with absent fathers, care should be taken not to extrapolate the results too broadly to other populations of daughters who grew up with absent fathers (e.g., those who had absent fathers due to death or incarceration).

Furthermore, demographic information of the participants with regards to age, race, socioeconomic status, marital or parental status was not included in the analysis of the present data, and as such it bears mentioning that the results of the current study could vary depending upon such variables. For example, much of the previous literature focuses on father-child relationships within specific racial or cultural groups, including: African American communities (Baker, 2014; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Lu et al., 2010); Hispanics (Lee & McLanahan, 2015; Lopez et al., 2012); Kenya (Mungai, 2012); South Africa (Lesch & Scheffler, 2015; Wessels & Lesch, 2014); Malaysia (Sheppard et al., 2014); Pakistan (Sarwar & Azmat, 2013), and Italy (Pizzorno et al., 2014; Puppa & Miele, 2015). Additional research in the review of the literature also specifically targeted college students (Rostad et al., 2014), children with fathers struggling with substance abuse (Soderstrom & Skarderkud, 2013), or other controlled demographic variables that were not controlled for in the current study.

Recommendations

The current study can provide numerous guidelines with regards to recommendations for future research. First, as noted in the limitations section of this chapter, the inclusion of demographic information of adult daughters who grew up with absent fathers with respect to age, race, socioeconomic status, or marital or parental status could provide a useful additional layer to the continuance of these findings. Particularly as key findings of the current study related to relationship decisions and other types of decision-making processes (e.g., career, education, etc.), these would be valuable variables to contribute to the discussion. This would also allow for a verifiably diverse sample population.

Further, an interesting direction for future research would be to explore the possible interaction effects between an absent father and the resulting social learning and social development effects of daughters' relationships with their single mothers. The results of the current study revealed a significant moderating effect with regards to the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers, in their home lives growing up. This finding, while certainly relevant, bears further attention as it provides the opportunity to expand the current study in different directions more tangential to the scope of the current project. For example, the existing literature clearly demonstrates the importance of mother-child relationships, as well as demonstrable links between marital conflict and mother-father relationships on child development and behavior (c.f., Gil, 2014; Holland & McElwain, 2013; Werneck et al., 2014). Holland and McElwain (2013) and Werneck et al. (2014) specifically found that marital quality was related to the quality of the father-child relationship, so it follows then that parental hostility and attitudes of the mother toward an absent father could similarly impact the lived experiences of daughters growing up in households with absent fathers.

Another recommendation is to explore further the role of communities on daughters' decision-making processes, given what self-in-relation theory (Surrey, 1985) states about the critical role of women's relationships with others in their sense of self, and the demonstrated importance of the community environment in daughters' lived experiences in the current study. Mackey and Buttram (2012) have also demonstrated a connection between father presence and communities, specifically illustrating that in communities where fathers are present, there is less violent crime compared to communities where many fathers are present (although there were additional mediating factors at play). Many participants in the current study reported feeling a lack of the guidance of a father while making decisions in terms of romantic relationships, for example, but the role of significant figures within their communities, for example other male family members, friends' fathers, or even friendships with other children with absent fathers in decision making provides another interesting direction for future research.

Finally, given that so much of the existing literature demonstrates a clear link between father involvement, the father-child relationship, and even fathers' education level on the academic achievement of children, further exploration is called for to investigate why for the participants in the current study, poor academic performance was not perceived to be a significant part of their lived experiences growing up without fathers.

Implications

This phenomenological study is distinctive because it is an in-depth qualitative study that focuses on the lived experiences of daughters with absent fathers, which may be the basis of engagement in social behaviors that affect them socially and economically. The information from this study can lead to positive social change in a number of ways. By gaining understanding of the experiences of daughters with absent fathers, social services professionals may provide

appropriate assistance to help these women cope better with their difficulties and struggles. Further, the findings of this study could find a fitting application within school systems, including school counseling and after school childcare or extracurricular programs, given the emphasis participants placed on the role of school and neighborhood environments with respect to their lived experiences.

Most studies about father absence are centered on daughters' psychosocial effects, cognitive development, character development, and academic difficulties (Griffin, 1998; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Wilson & Prior, 2011). The results of this study provide additional insights about how women with absent fathers function in terms of their romantic lives, relationships to their communities, and in the meaning of these women's feelings towards and perceptions of life, which are essential in explaining their social behaviors.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results of this study are largely consistent with the background against which they were interpreted, namely social development theory and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). The nature of the qualitative, phenomenological methodology used in this study serves to advance the literature in terms of demonstrating how to proceed with phenomenological analysis of qualitative data with regards to daughters with absent fathers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide a phenomenological account of the lived experiences of daughters who grew up with absent fathers, and the effects of paternal absence on the participants' experiences at home, in their neighborhoods, at school, and in their decision-making processes. The study addresses a gap in the literature with regards to the effects of having an absent father on adult daughters' decision-making processes.

Scholars have pointed to a need for more in-depth qualitative research focusing on experiences and decision-making processes of daughters who grew up without a father figure, and the present study provides a phenomenological account of this with respect to adult females. This is significant because most research has focused on father absenteeism during childhood. This study was therefore significant because it not only relied on in-person interviews as a methodology, but also featured only adult women as participants.

Given the theoretical background of social learning and social development theories, it was expected that the present study would illustrate that the social environment and modeled social behaviors that were a part of the lived experiences of daughters growing up with absent fathers would experience lasting and significant effects of the lack of a paternal influence and relationship. Indeed, and also in keeping with a body of previous literature that demonstrates the adverse effects of the lack of paternal support or relationship, this study revealed that the social influence of home life as well as school and neighborhood environments played central roles in the lived experiences of the participants. The abstract meanings or lessons that participants derived from having absent fathers included the importance of being independent, of appreciating the people who remained with them, and of making a better life for their own children by modeling good parenting or choosing a good mate, also underscoring the importance of social influence and modeling.

The findings in terms of the impact of growing up with an absent father on adult daughters' decision-making processes helpfully contribute to the existing literature, which largely focuses on overt sexual behavior, sexual risk-taking, and dating violence, for example, by providing insight into non-sexual aspects of romantic decision making. The participants in this study reported missing the lack of a father's input and guidance specifically with respect to their

choices in partners, where many participants found themselves either searching for a father-figure in a partner, or being drawn to emotionally unavailable, unstable, or unreliable men because they perceived such qualities as normal.

All told, by providing a qualitative, phenomenological analysis of adult women's experiences, meaning making processes, and decision making processes in the context of having grown up with absent fathers, this study contributes added texture and color to existing quantitative measures. The results provide a beneficial jumping-off point for further research to explore in-depth the individual aspects and variables within these experiences, focusing on specific populations or demographics of adult daughters, exploring further the role of father absence on female children's education, and the role of daughters' communities and social modeling from a single mother in shaping their lived experiences, search for meaning and understanding, and decision-making processes.

The conclusion of chapter five here also concludes this study.

References

Allgood, S. M., Beckert, T. E., & Peterson, C. (2012). The role of father involvement in the perceived psychological well-being of young adult daughters: A retrospective study. *North American Journal of Psychology, 14*(1), 95-97.

Alleyne-Green, B., Grinnell-Davis, C., Clark, T. T., & Cryer-Coupet, Q. R. (2015). The role of fathers in reducing dating violence victimization and sexual risk behaviors among a national sample of Black adolescents. *Children and Youth Services Review, 55*, 48-55. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.04.005.

Assari, S., Caldwell, C. H., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2015). Low parental support in late adolescence predicts obesity in young adulthood: Gender differences in a 12-year cohort of African Americans. *Journal of Diabetes and Metabolic Disorders, 14*, 47-52. doi:10.1186/s40200-015-0176-8.

Azeem, M., Salfi, N. A., & Dogar, A. H. (2012). Usage of NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. *Academic Research International*, *2*(1), 262-266. Retrieved from http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.2(1)/2012(2.1-30).pdf

Baggett, E., Shaffer, A., & Muetzelfeld, H. (2015). Father–daughter parentification and young adult romantic relationships among college women. *Journal of Family Issues, 36*(6), 760-783. doi:10.1177/0192513X13499759.

Baker, C. (2014). African American fathers' contributions to children's early academic achievement: Evidence from two-parent families from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Birth Cohort. *Early Education & Development, 25*(1), 19-35. doi:10.1080/10409289.2013.764225.

Baker, M., & Milligan, K. (2013). Boy-girl differences in parental time investments: Evidence from three countries. *The National Bureau of Economic Research*. doi:10.3386/w18893.

Brauer, J., & Tittle, C. (2012). Social learning theory and human reinforcement. *Sociological Spectrum, 32*(2), 157-177. doi:10.1080/02732173.2012.646160.

Bryan, D. M. (2014). To parent or provide? The effect of the provider role on low-income men's decisions about fatherhood and paternal engagement. *Fathering*, *11*(1), 71-89.

Byrd-Craven, J., Auer, B. J., Granger, D. A., & Massey, A. R. (2012). The father-daughter dance: The relationship between father-daughter relationship quality and daughters' stress response. *Journal of Family Psychology, 26*(1), 87-94. doi:10.1037/a0026588.

Campbell, C. A., Howard, D., Rayford, B. S., & Gordon, D. M. (2015). Fathers matter: Involving and engaging fathers in the child welfare system process. *Children and Youth Services Review, 53*, 84-92. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.03.020.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chavis, A. M. (2012). Social learning theory and behavioral therapy: Considering human behaviors within the social and cultural context of individuals and families. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 22*(1), 54-64. doi:10.1080/10911359.2011.598828.

Choo, H., & Shek, D. (2013). Quality of parent-child relationship, family conflict, peer pressure, and drinking behaviors of adolescents in an Asian context: The case of Singapore. *Social Indicators Research, 110*(3), 1141-1158.

Coakley, T. M. (2013). The influence of father involvement on child welfare permanency outcomes: A secondary data analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(1), 174-182.

DeBell, M. (2008). Children living without their fathers: Population estimates and indicators of educational well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 87*(3), 427-443.

Dedonno, M. A., & Fagan, J. F. (2013). The influence of family attributes on college students' academic self-concept. *North American Journal of Psychology, 15*(1), 49-55.

Demidenko, N., Manion, I., & Lee, C. M. (2015). Father-daughter attachment and communication in depressed and nondepressed adolescent girls. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(6), 1727-1734.

Delpriore, D. J., Hill, S. E., & Simpson, J. (2013). The effects of paternal disengagement on women's sexual decision making: An experimental approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 105*(2), 234-246. doi:10.1037/a0032784.

den Hoonaard, V., Van den Hoonaard, W. C., den Hoonaard, V., & Van den Hoonaard, D. K. (2013). *Essentials of thinking ethically in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Left Coast Press.

East, L., Jackson, D., & O'Brien, L. (2006). Father absence and adolescent development: A review of the literature. *Journal of Child Healthcare*, *10*(4), 283-295.

Ellis, B. (2004). Timing of pubertal maturation in girls: An integrated life history approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(6), 920-958.

Ellis, B. J., Schlomer, G. L., Tilley, E. H., & Butler, E. A. (2012). Impact of fathers on risky sexual behavior in daughters: A genetically and environmentally controlled sibling study. *Development and Psychopathology, 24*(1), 317-332. doi:10.1017/S095457941100085X.

Ford, J. A., & Ong, J. (2014). Non-medical use of prescription stimulants for academic purposes among college students: A test of social learning theory. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 144*, 279-282. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2014.09.011.

Francis, J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. P. & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalizing data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology & Health, 25*(10), 1229-1245. doi: 10.1080/08870440903194015

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(9), 1408-1416. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3

Gallarin, M., & Alonso-Arbiol, I. (2012). Parenting practices, parental attachment and aggressiveness in adolescence: A predictive model. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(6), 1601-1610. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.07.002.

Galovan, A. M., Holmes, E. K., Schramm, D. G., & Lee, T. R. (2014). Father involvement, father-child relationship quality, and satisfaction with family work. *Journal of Family Issues, 35*(13), 1846-1867. doi:10.1177/0192513X13479948.

Geller, A., Cooper, C., Garfinkel, I., Schwartz-Soicher, O., & Mincy, R. (2012). Beyond absenteeism: Father incarceration and child development. *Demography, 49*(1), 49-76. doi:10.1007/s13524-011-0081-9.

Gil. V. (2014). Co-parenting and children's adjustment to divorce: The role of geographical distance from fathers. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 55*(7), 503-526. doi:10.1080/10502556.2014.950900.

Glass, J., & Levchak, P. (2014). Red states, blue states, and divorce: Understanding the impact of conservative Protestantism on regional variation in divorce rates. *American Journal of Sociology, 119*(4), 1002-1046.

Goodman, L. A. (2011). Comment: On respondent-driven sampling and snowball sampling in hard-to-reach populations and snowball sampling not in hard-to-reach populations. *Sociological Methodology*, *41*(1), 347-353. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9531.2011.01242.x

Guilamo-Ramos, V., Boris, A., Lee, J., McCarthy, K., Michael, S. L., Pitt-Barnes, S. & Dittus, P. (2012). Paternal influences on adolescent sexual risk behaviors: A structured literature review. *Pediatrics, 130*(5), 1313-1325.

Haaza, D. H., Kneavela, M., & Browning, S. W. (2014). The father-daughter relationship and intimacy in the marriages of daughters of divorce. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 55*(2), 164-177. doi:10.1080/10502556.2013.871962.

Hammersley, M. (2013). *What's wrong with ethnography?* London, UK: Routledge.

Hines, E. M., & Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2013). Parental characteristics, ecological factors, and the academic achievement of African American males. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 91*(1), 68-78.

Holland, A. S., & McElwain, N. L. (2013). Maternal and paternal perceptions of co-parenting as a link between marital quality and the parent-toddler relationship. *Journal of Family Psychology, 27*(1), 117-126. doi:10.1037/a0031427.

Horesh, N., Sommerfeld, E., Wolf, M., Zubery, E., & Zalsman, G. (2015). Father-daughter relationship and the severity of eating disorders. *European Psychiatry, 30*(1), 114-121.

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigor in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, *20*(4), 12-17. doi:10.7748/nr2013.03.20.4.12.e326

Hutchinson, M. K. (2011). Talking to daddy's little girl about sex: Daughters' reports of sexual communication and support from fathers. *Journal of Family Issues, 32*(4), 550-572. doi:10.1177/0192513X10384222.

Hycner, R. H. (1999). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. In A. Bryman & R.G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative research* (Vol. 3, pp. 143-164). London, UK: Sage.

Ikäheimo, O., Laukkanen, M., Hakko, H., & Räsänen, P. (2013). Association of family structure to later criminality: A population-based follow-up study of adolescent psychiatric inpatients in northern Finland. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 44(2), 233-246. doi:10.1007/s10578-012-0321-2.

James, J., Ellis, B. J., Schlomer, G. L., & Garber, J. (2012). Sex-specific pathways to early puberty, sexual debut, and sexual risk taking: Tests of an integrated evolutionary-developmental model. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(3), 687-702.

Johnson, M. S. (2013). Strength and respectability: Black women's negotiation of racialized gender ideals and the role of daughter-father relationships. *Gender and Society, 27*(6), 889-912. doi:10.1177/0891243213494263.

Jornt, J. M., & Kalmijnb, M. (2014). Do mother's and father's education condition the impact of parental divorce on child well-being? *Social Science Research, 44*, 187–199. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2013.12.003.

Kalil, A., Ryan, R., & Chor, E. (2014). Time investments in children across family structures. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 654*(1), 150-168. doi:10.1177/0002716214528276.

Kalmijn, M. (2015). Family disruption and intergenerational reproduction: Comparing the

influences of married parents, divorced parents, and step parents. *Demography, 52*(3),

811-833. doi:10.1007/s13524-015-0388-z.

Kauppinen, A., & Juho, A. (2012). Internationalization of SMEs from the perspective of social

learning theory. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 10*(3), 200-231.

doi:10.1007/s10843-012-0093-6.

Kearsley, G. (2015). *The theory into practice database.* Retrieved from

http://InstructionalDesign.org.

Krampe, E. M., & Newton, R. R. (2012). Reflecting on the father: Childhood family structure

and women's paternal relationships. *Journal of Family Issues, 33*(6), 773-800.

Krohn, F. B., & Bogan, Z. (2001). The effects absent fathers have on female development and

college attendance. *College Student Journal*, *35*(4), 598-608.

La Guardia, A. C., Nelson, J. A., & Lertora, I. M. (2014). The impact of father absence on

daughter sexual development and behaviors. *The Family Journal*, *22*(3), 339-346.

doi:10.1177/1066480714529887.

Lee, D., & McLanahan, S. (2015). Family structure transitions and child development:

Instability, selection, and population heterogeneity. *American Sociological Review, 80*(4),

738-763. doi:10.1177/0003122415592129.

Lesch, E., & Scheffler, F. (2015). I want a better life for her: Father-adolescent daughter

relationships in minority, low-income South African community. *Marriage and Family

Review*. doi:10.1080/01494929.2015.1059786.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research.

Qualitative Inquiry, 1, 275-289. doi:10.1177/107780049500100301

Liu, J., McMahon, M., & Watson, M. (2015). Parental influence on child career development in mainland China: A qualitative study. *Career Development Quarterly, 63*(1), 74-87. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2015.00096.x.

Lopez, V., Corona, R., & Lopez, V. (2012). Troubled relationships: High-risk Latina adolescents and nonresident fathers. *Journal of Family Issues, 33*(6), 715-744. doi:10.1177/0192513X11434915.

Louie, A. D., & Cromer, L. D. (2014). Parent-child attachment during the deployment cycle: Impact on reintegration parenting stress. *Professional Psychology Research and Practice, 45*(6), 496-504.

Lu, M. C., Jones, L., Bond, M. J., Wright, K., Pumpuang, M., Maidenberg, M., & Rowley, D. L. (2010). Where is the F (Father) in MCH (Maternal Child Health)? Father involvement in African American families. *Ethnicity & Disease, 20*, 49-61.

Mackey, W. C., & Buttram, H. D. (2012). Father presence in a community and levels of violent crime a dynamic beyond the arm of the law. *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies, 37*(2), 222-249.

Mackey, B. & Mackey, W. C. (2012). Father presence and educational attainment: Dad as a catalyst for high school graduations. *Education, 133*(1), 139-150.

Madkour, A. S., Farhat, T., Halpern, C. T., Gabhainn, S. N., & Godeau, E. (2012). Parents' support and knowledge of their daughters' lives, and females' early sexual initiation in nine European countries. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 44*(3), 167-176. doi:10.1363/4416712.

Mandemakers, J. J. & Kalmijn, M. (2014). Do mother's and father's education condition the

impact of parental divorce on child well-being? *Social Science Research, 44*, 187-199.

doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2013.12.003.

Manlove, J., Wildsmith, E., Ikramullah, E., Terry-Humen, E., & Schelar, E. (2012). Family

environments and the relationship context of first adolescent sex: Correlates of first sex in

a casual versus steady relationship. *Social Science Research, 41*(4), 861-875.

doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.02.003.

Marissa, A., & Ishaaq, F. I. (2012). The correlation of perception on the role of father with

academic achievement in senior high school student. *Social and Behavioral Sciences, 69*,

1369-1373. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.12.074.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage.

Maskaly, J. & Donner, C. (2015). A theoretical integration of social learning theory with terror

management theory: Towards an explanation of police shootings of unarmed suspects.

American Journal of Criminal Justice, 40(2), 205-224. doi:10.1007/s12103-015-9293-7.

Matias, C., O'Connor, T. G., Futh, A., & Scott, S. (2014). Observational attachment theory-

based parenting measures predict children's attachment narratives independently from

social learning theory-based measures. *Attachment and Human Development, 16*(1), 77-

92. doi:10.1080/14616734.2013.851333.

McGovern, A. R., Alexopoulos, G. S., Yuen, G. S., Morimoto, S. S., & Gunning-Dixon, F. M.

(2014). Reward-related decision making in older adults: Relationship to clinical

presentation of depression. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, *29*(11), 1125-

1131. doi:10.1002/gps.4200

McLaughlin, K., & Muldoon, O. (2014). Father identity, involvement and work-family balance: An in-depth interview study. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 24*(5), 439-452. doi:10.1002/casp.2183.

Mendle, J., Harden, K. P., Turkheimer, E., Van Hulle, C. A., D'Onofrio, B. M., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Lahey, B. B. (2009). Associations between father absence and age of first sexual intercourse. *Child Development*, *80*(5), 1463-1480.

Miles-McLean, H., Liss, M., & Erchull, M. J. (2014). Fathers, daughters, and self-objectification: Does bonding style matter? *Body Image, 11*(4), 534-542. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.005.

Miller, D. P., Nepomnyaschy, L., Ibarra, G. L., & Garasky, S. (2014). Family structure and child food insecurity. *The American Journal of Public Health, 104*(7), 70-77.

Miller, M. E., Ruzek, S. B., Bass, Bauerle, So., Gordon, T. F., & Ducette, J. P. (2013). Why fathers are too important to ignore: Communication about sexuality between fathers and daughters. *Holistic Nursing Practice, 27*(2), 89-97. doi:10.1097/HNP.0b013e318280f78a.

Mitchell, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Garfinkel, I., Mclanahar, S., Notterman, D., & Hobcraft, J. (2015). Family structure instability, genetic sensitivity, and child well-being. *American Journal of Sociology, 120*(4), 1195-225.

Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, *25*(9), 1212-1222. doi:10.1177/1049732315588501

Mungai, A. M. (2012). Academic achievement of girls in rural schools in Kenya. *Africa Education Review, 9*(1), 63-85. doi:10.1080/18146627.2012.683591.

Murray, K., Dwyer, K., Rubin, K., Knighton-Wisor, S., & Booth-LaForce, C. (2014). Parent-child relationships, parental psychological control, and aggression: Maternal and paternal

relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 43*(8), 1361-1373. doi:10.1007/s10964-013-0019-1.

Najam, N., & Kausar, R. (2012.) Father acceptance: Rejection, father involvement, and socio emotional adjustment of adolescents in Pakistan. *Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 22*(1), 1-22.

Newland, R., Ciciolla, L., & Crnic, K. (2015). Crossover effects among parental hostility and parent-child relationships during the preschool period. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(7), 2107-2119.

Nielsen, L. (2014). Young adult daughters' relationships with their fathers: Review of recent research. *Marriage and Family Review, 50*(4), 360-372. doi:10.1080/01494929.2013.879553.

Nielsen, L. (2012). *Father-daughter relationships: Contemporary research and issues*. New York, NY: Routledge Academic Publishing.

O'Connor, T., Matias, C., Futh, A., Tantam, G., & Scott, S. (2013). Social learning theory parenting intervention promotes attachment-based care giving in young children: Randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 42*(3), 358-370. doi:10.1080/15374416.2012.723262.

Owton, H. (2012). Streams of bereavement. *Qualitative Inquiry, 18*(5), 438-441. doi:10.1177/1077800411434282.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 5*, 1-12. doi:10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Perini, T., Ditzen, B., Hengartner, M., & Ehlert, U. (2012). Sensation seeking in fathers: The impact on testosterone and paternal investment. *Hormones and Behavior, 61*(2), 191-195. doi:10.1016/j.yhbeh.2011.12.004.

Perkins, R. M. (2001). The father-daughter relationship: Familial interactions that impact a daughter's style of life. *College Student Journal, 35*(4), 616-627.

Peyper, E., De Klerk, W., & Spies, R. (2015). Experiences of young adult women with emotionally absent fathers. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 25*(2), 127-133. doi:10.1080/14330237.2015.1021513.

Pillemer, K., Munsch, C. L., Fuller-Rowell, T., Riffin, C., & Suitor, J. J. (2012). Ambivalence toward adult children: Differences between mothers and fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 74*(5), 1101-1114.

Pingel, E. S., Bauermeister, J. A., Elkington, K. S., Fergus, S., Caldwell, C. H., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2012). Condom use trajectories in adolescence and the transition to adulthood: The role of mother and father support. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 22*(2), 350-366. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2011.00775.x.

Pizzorno, M. C., Benozzo, A., Fina, A., Sabato, S., & Scopesi, M. (2014). Parent-child career construction: A narrative study from a gender perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 84*(3), 420-430. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2014.03.001.

Potard, C., Courtois, R., Réveillère, C., Bréchon, G., & Courtois, A. (2014). The relationship between parental attachment and sexuality in early adolescence. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth,* 1-10. doi:10.1080/02673843.2013.873065.

Pruett, M., Cowan, C., Cowan, P. A., & Pruett, K. (2009). Lessons learned from the supporting

    father involvement study: A cross-cultural preventive intervention for low-income

    families with young children. *Journal of Social Science Research, 35*(2), 163-179.

Puppa, F. D., & Miele, F. (2015). Beyond (but not too much) the male breadwinner model: A

    qualitative study on child care and masculinities in contemporary Italy. Modern *Italy,*

    20(2), 167-184. doi:10.1080/13532944.2015.1025729.

Ramchandani, P.G., Domoney, J., Sethna, V., Psychogiou, L., Vlachos, H., & Murray, L. (2012).

    Do early father-infant interactions predict the onset of externalizing behaviors in young

    children? Findings from a longitudinal cohort study. *Journal of Child Psychiatry.*

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2013).*Qualitative research practice: A*

    guide for social science students and researchers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rostad, W. L., Silverman, P., & McDonald, M. K. (2014). Daddy's little girl goes to college: An

    investigation of females' perceived closeness with fathers and later risky behaviors.

    Journal of American College Health, 62(4), 213-220.

    doi:10.1080/07448481.2014.887570.

Rowan, K., Parent-Boursier, C., & Hébert, M. (2015). Security in father-child relationship and

    behavior problems in sexually abused children. *Journal of Family Violence, 30*(1), 113-

    122. doi:10.1007/s10896-014-9653-y.

Ryan, R. M., Claessens, A., & Markowitz, A. J. (2015). Associations between family structure

    change and child behavior problems: The moderating effect of family income. *Child*

    Development, 86(1), 112-127. doi:10.1111/cdev.12283.

Sarwar, A., & Azmat, A. (2013). Factors having impact on the career decisions: Study of

    business graduates in Pakistan. *Business Management Dynamics, 2*(7), 9-19.

Sheppard, P., Snopkowski, K., & Sear, R. (2014). Father absence and reproduction-related

    outcomes in Malaysia: A transitional fertility population. *Human Nature, 25*(2), 213-234.

    doi:10.1007/s12110-014-9195-2.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage.

Soderstrom, K., & Skarderkud, F. (2013). The good, the bad, and the invisible father: A

    phenomenological study of fatherhood in men with substance use disorder. *Fathering,*

    11(1), 31-51. doi:10.3149/fth.1101.31.

Strauss, D. (2013). Will you leave me too? The impact of father absence on the treatment of a

    10-year-old girl. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 25*(2), 119-130.

    doi:10.2989/17280583.2013.790823.

Surrey, J. L. (1985). *Self-in-relation: A theory of women's development*. Wellesley, MA: Stone

    Center Working Papers Series.

Tastan, N. (2013). Effect of father-child bonding on conflict resolution during emerging

    adulthood. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 41*(8), 1339-1346.

Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative

    research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, *16*(2), 151-155.

    doi:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x

Tuckman, B. W., & Harper, B. E. (2012). *Conducting educational research*. Lanham, MD:

    Rowman & Littlefield.

Turner, H. A., Finkelhor, D., Hamby, S. L., & Shattuck, A. (2013). Family structure,

    victimization, and child mental health in a nationally representative sample. *Social*

    Science & Medicine, 87, 39-52. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.02.034.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1998). *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Walker, S., Read, S., & Priest, H. (2013). Use of reflexivity in a mixed-methods study. *Nurse Researcher, 20*(3), 38-43. doi:10.7748/nr2013.01.20.3.38.c9496

Werneck, H., Eder, M. O., Yanagida, T., & Rollett, B. (2014). Predicting adolescents' parent-child relationship quality from parental personality, marital conflict, and adolescents' personality. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 11*(2), 159-176. doi:10.1080/17405629.2013.876914.

Wessels, S., & Lesch, E. (2014). Young adult South African daughters' perceptions of paternal involvement and nurturance. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships, 8*(2), 128-143.

Westphal, S. K., Poortman, A., & Van Der Lippe, T. (2014). Non-resident father-child contact across divorce cohorts: The role of father involvement during marriage. *European Sociological Review, 30*(4), 444-456.

Wilson, K. R., & Prior, M. R. (2011). Father involvement and child well-being. *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health, 47*(7), 405-407. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1754.2010.01770.x

Wright, P. J., Randall, A. K., & Arroyo, A. (2013). Father-daughter communication about sex moderates the association between exposure to MTV's 16 and Pregnant/Teen Mom and female students' pregnancy-risk. *Sexuality and Culture, 17*(1), 50-66. doi:10.1007/s12119-012-9137-2.

Xu, Q., & O'Brien, M. (2014). Fathers and teenage daughters in Shanghai: Intimacy, gender, and care. *Journal of Family Studies, 20*(3), 311-322. doi:10.1080/13229400.2014.11082014.

Yin, R. K. (2012). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zhao, X., Lim, V. K. G., & Teo, T. S. H. (2012). The long arm of job insecurity: Its impact on career-specific parenting behaviors and youths' career self-efficacy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 80*(3), 619-628. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.018.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your experience of having an absent father as a child?
2. How would you describe your experience of having an absent father as an adult?
3. How did having an absent father affect your home life? (You mean as a child?)
4. How did having an absent father affect your school life?
5. How did having an absent father affect living and playing in your neighborhood?
6. As a child, how did you understand, or make sense of, having an absent father?
7. How is do you understand your father's absence now, as an adult?
8. How did having an absent father affect coping with life struggles and decision-making?
9. What are some specific examples where having an absent father affected your decision-making?
10. What else would you like to add that you think is important in understanding your experience of having an absent father?