Jurnal Keluarga Berencana
P-ISSN: 2527-3132 E-ISSN: 2503-3379
Vol. 11 No. 1, 2026
https://ejurnal.kemendukbangga.go.id/
Kementerian Kependudukan dan Pembangunan Keluarga/BKKBN

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES AMONG FATHERLESS AND NON-FATHERLESS YOUTHS AGED 10-19 YEARS IN TRENGGALEK REGENCY

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ABSTRACT
Fatherlessness, referring to the absence of a father figure, has emerged as an increasingly significant issue in Indonesia, including in Trenggalek Regency, due to its potential influence on adolescent development. Adolescents raised without fathers are more likely to experience difficulties in emotional, social, and academic domains. This study employed a quantitative technique using a quantitative descriptive method. Populations included were those of adolescents aged between 10 until 19 years, living in Trenggalek Regency, with a sample of 60 people selected through purposive sampling, consisting of 30 fatherless and 30 non-fatherless youths. A quantitative comparative descriptive design was applied. The study involved 60 adolescents selected through purposive sampling, consisting of 30 fatherless and 30 non-fatherless participants. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire assessing emotional, social, academic, and self-confidence aspects. Data were analyzed using the Mann–Whitney U test with a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with non-fatherless adolescents showing higher overall developmental scores ($p < 0.05$). In conclusion, the presence of a father plays an important role in supporting adolescent development. These findings highlight the need for family-based interventions and psychosocial support programs to mitigate the negative effects of father absence.

Keywords: adolescent development; father's role; fatherless and non-fatherless.

INTRODUCTION
Adolescence is the stage of life between the ages of 10 and 19. This is the stage that is usually characterized by the teenage period is the transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by the maturation of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects. Adolescence is acknowledged as a phase characterized by swift physiological and behavioral developments. Over the period of adolescence, they encounter the challenging task of defining themselves. Such formation may be contributed to by the contextual settings within and around the teenager's family (Sznitman et al., 2019; Maneschy et al., 2022). Father involvement has been prized over the past decades as a significant family well-being determinant. Being and positive child development. Heads of households being fathers affect the life satisfaction of family members. If the leading family members are happy or have an increased subjective sense of well-being, other family members also tend to be emotionally happy pula (Diniz et al., 2021; Subeqi & Adi, 2022). Total mental and physical well-being of the fathers greatly influences the development of the child's mental and social organization. Furthermore, besides the aspect of offering physical and economic protection, fathers also facilitate identity formation, independence, and emotional

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Article History
Received: 13-11-2025 Accepted: 30-06-2026
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stability, all of which are essential to resolving teenage challenge. The involvement of fathers is associated with and entwined with affective attachment disorders, high social anxiety, and identity disorders in adolescence (Purwani et al., 2023; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2021). The high incidence of family breakup and the following absence of fathers is high. Questions about its impact on the mental condition among children within the life cycle (Culpin et al., 2022; Nduna & Sikweyiya, 2015).

The phenomenon of father absence among the Indonesian family on physical and mental levels has been linked to various mental disorders, emotional regulation problems, social problems, self-hatred, and social adaptation impairment (Allport et al., 2018; Sengkey et al., 2025) . Ranks third among the world's highest rates of children raised without an ideal father, by a large-impacts the development of identity crisis, sexual development, and unfavourable psychological outcomes that persist through adulthood (Fajriyanti et al., 2024; Isnaini et al., 2021).

Previous studies in Indonesia have shown a significant relationship between father absence and adolescent outcomes. Research conducted in North Bengkulu found a moderate and significant correlation between fatherlessness and adolescent development ($r = 0.471$; $p < 0.05$) among 82 high school students (Zulkarnaini & Nio, 2023). Furthermore, a study in Medan reported a significant and consistent correlation between paternal absence and loneliness among adolescent girls ($r = 0.417$; $p < 0.001$; $n = 349$) (Damanik et al., 2024). Another study also found that father involvement had a positive effect on adolescents' emotional regulation, although the contribution was relatively small (3.2%) (Khofifah et al., 2023).

However, although previous studies have provided insights into the role of fathers in adolescent mental development across various regions in Indonesia, few have explicitly compared adolescents with and without father figures, particularly at the community level such as in Trenggalek Regency. Therefore, this study focuses on a comparative quantitative analysis of adolescents aged 10–19 years in Trenggalek Regency, using a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess emotional, social, academic, and self-confidence aspects, which have been widely used in previous studies (Duckworth et al., 2025). The data analysis technique used was the Mann-Whitney U test and it revealed that the data were not normally distributed and contained two independent groups: fatherless and non-fatherless.

The research focuses specifically on the comparison between the emotional, social, academic, and self-confidence adolescent adaptation between the ages 10 and 19 years old in Trenggalek Regency, and to find the intervening variables that connect these entities. The results of the study are that to make significant theoretical contribution through an analysis of the regional writing about the effect of father involvement on adolescent growth in Indonesia, particularly in Trenggalek Regency. Practically, the findings from the study can be used to inform more fitting intervention programmes, such as communication skills among children, youth programmes, and also encompasses psychological support for orphaned individuals. Consequently, this research is not solely scholarly pertinent yet simultaneously advantageous for the local community in Trenggalek.

METHOD

The study employed a quantitative approach with a comparative descriptive research design, aiming to compare emotional, social, academic, and self-confidence development between fatherless and non-fatherless adolescent groups. The study was conducted in July 2025 in Trenggalek Regency, considering the relatively high prevalence of paternal absence in the region. The research population included all adolescents aged 10–19 years in Trenggalek. The sample consisted of 60 participants selected through purposive sampling, including 30 fatherless and 30 non-fatherless adolescents. The sample size of 60 participants was chosen by purposive sampling and included 30 adolescents fatherless and 30 non-fatherless teenagers.

Data was collected by distributing a closed-ended questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale to measure emotional, social, academic, and self-confidence aspects. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted on 30 participants to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument. Self-confidence was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which

consists of 15 Likert-scale items and has been widely validated and shown to be reliable in adolescent populations. Academic performance and self-control were conceptualized as being influenced by self-regulation and discipline, respectively, as evidenced in a study by Duckworth et al. (2025) which shows that self-discipline predicts academic achievement more powerfully than did the tests of IQ. The aggression component was rated by an adaptive aggression scale from an existing modern adolescent psychology instrument.

After the data has been obtained, the data screened, the data coded, and the data checked for completeness. To test the disparity in scores among two independent groups (fatherless and non-fatherless), the non-fatherless group, the non-parametric test of Mann Whitney U was employed since the distribution could not be attained and the data was ordinal. This test was on the four Features of teenage growth at the level of significance = 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved a total of 60 adolescent respondents aged 10-19 years in Trenggalek Regency. Two of the respondent groups each included 30 father-absent adolescents (without physical or mental presence of a father) and 30 non-fatherless teenagers (with active involvement by the father). Data was obtained by the distribution of surveys gauging Four areas of adolescent development are social, emotional, academic, and self-confidence. The results of the comparative analysis using the Mann–Whitney U test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the Mann-Whitney U Test Results.

Development Aspect	Mean Rank Fatherless	Mean Rank Non-Fatherless	Man-Whitney U	p-value	Conclusion
Emotional	35.70	25.30	294.000	0.017	Significantly different
Social	32.70	28.30	384.000	0.327	Non significantly different
Academic	37.43	23.57	242.000	0.002	Significantly different
Self-confidence	31.83	29.17	410.000	0.552	Non significantly different

Source: Processed by researcher, 2025.

Emotional Aspect

The mean rank for the fatherless group was 35.70, whereas the non-fatherless group had a mean rank of 25.30. The Mann–Whitney U value was 294.00, with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.017. This indicates a statistically significant difference in the emotional aspect between the two groups ($p < 0.05$).

Social Aspect

The average score for the fatherless group was 32.70, whereas the non-fatherless group had a mean rank of 28.30. The Mann–Whitney U value was 384.00, with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.327. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the social aspect between the two groups ($p > 0.05$).

Academic Aspect

The mean of the fatherless group was 37.43 and the non-fatherless group scored 23.57. The U value was 242.00 and the Asymp. Sig. was 0.002, and hence indicating a very significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the two groups on the academic aspects. Thus, fatherless Teenagers

usually express more pronounced difficulties within academic achievement, such as deterioration in

Self-Confidence Aspect

The mean for the fatherless group is 31.83 and for the non-fatherless group is 29.17. U value is 410.00 and the Asymp. Sig. is 0.552, implying that there is no significant difference. These results mean that there is no significant difference between the two groups regarding self-confidence. This can be interpreted to mean that self-confidence does not entirely depend on the presence of a father and can be influenced by other forces like support from the mother, peers, or the school environment.

From Table 1, the overall mean score of development was also more in the fatherless adolescent group, while the social and self-confidence correlated weren't statistically significant. Meanwhile, the areas of learning and emotions were the most affected by fatherless adolescent status.

DISCUSSION

Emotional Aspect

The findings of this study indicate that fatherless adolescents tend to experience greater emotional instability compared to those who grow up with an actively involved father, as reflected by a significant difference ($p = 0.017$). This suggests that the presence of a father plays an important role in supporting adolescents' emotional development. From a theoretical perspective, family and developmental theories emphasize that parental involvement, particularly that of fathers, contributes significantly to the formation of emotional regulation and self-identity during adolescence. Fathers often serve as role models in managing emotions, problem-solving, and coping with stress. Therefore, the absence of paternal involvement may lead to difficulties in emotional regulation, increasing the risk of psychological distress.

This finding is consistent with previous studies which report that father absence is associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems among adolescents (Kamilla et al., 2022; Rollè et al., 2019). Father absence has been linked with an increased risk of depression, anxiety disorder, aggressive behavior and challenges in regulating emotional expressions (Sengkey et al., 2025). Adolescents who lack paternal support may experience feelings of rejection, loneliness, or insecurity, which can contribute to emotional instability. In addition, early parental absence has been linked to long-term emotional and cognitive consequences, including increased depressive symptoms later in childhood (Yang et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the absence of a father may reduce the availability of emotional guidance and supervision within the family environment. This can limit adolescents' ability to develop effective coping strategies when facing stressors, thereby increasing emotional vulnerability. In such cases, adolescents may rely more heavily on external sources of support, such as peers or other family members, which may not always provide adequate emotional stability.

Social Aspects

Although the fatherless group showed a higher mean rank (32.70) compared to the non-fatherless group (28.30), the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that the presence of a father may not be a determining factor in adolescents' social development. This finding differs from several previous studies that reported a positive association between father involvement and adolescents' social competence. However, the non-significant result indicates that other environmental factors may play a more substantial role in shaping social skills. From a theoretical perspective, this finding can be explained by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that adolescent development is influenced by multiple environmental systems, including family, peers, school, and the wider community (Cabrera, 2020; Mardia, 2025; Ndijuye & Tandika, 2022). During adolescence, individuals tend to spend more time with peers, making peer relationships a key factor in social development.

Nevertheless, family relationships, including attachment to parents and interactions within the broader family system, remain important in shaping adolescents' cognitive and emotional development. The absence of a biological father may still have long-term implications for well-being, as previous studies have shown its association with economic hardship and psychological stress that can persist into adulthood (Keizer et al., 2019; Zharima et al., 2025).

Academic Aspects

Differences were significant for academic areas ($p = 0.002$), with fatherless teens having higher rankings, that is, fewer academic achievements. This means that father involvement contributes greatly to adolescents' academic achievement. The absence of a father These can cut down the control, motivational, and learning support that is usually provided by a father figure. Absence of parents at infancy and early childhood is associated with poor mathematical performance, measured 8 years later (McLanahan et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2022). These findings are in line with Nafisah et al. (2023), who stated that the more the father is involved with early childhood development, the lower the problematic behavior exhibited by children. In addition, Lambert et al. (2017) also found that adolescents with high father support showed better academic results than those without a father figure.

Self-Confidence Aspect

In self-confidence, too there hadn't been any significant difference between the fatherless and non-fatherless groups ($p = 0.552$). This indicates that teens' self-confidence is determinable through various other factors such as personal achievement, social relations, and facilitation support mothers, teachers, and the environment. The absence of a father does not directly affect this dimension significantly. Father involvement only explains about 38% variation, with the remainder being shaped outside the nuclear family, for example, social environment and individual experiences (Risnawati et al., 2021). The results of the study of 115 participants showed a significance of $0.00 < 0.05$, meaning that there was an effect due to the variable of paternal involvement in parenting on the variable of self-concept. The R square value was 0.487 or 48.7%, an increase that is deemed rather significant (Isnaini et al., 2021). Information provided by Yunanto & Kristinawati (2025) report that father involvement is correlated moderately with self-esteem ($r = 0.322$; $p < 0.001$), indicating the impact of other external factors. Research by Fauzana and Pratama (2023), they also suggest that the greater the role of fathers in parenting, the higher the self-confidence. So, it can be concluded that the absence of fathers, although it has a contribution to psychological growth, is not the only dominant factor to adolescent self-confidence building, due to exposure to protective factors such as support from mothers, social circumstances, and positive personal experiences.

Evaluation of Findings

This study has strengths in terms of its systematic quantitative approach and the use of non-parametric tests matching the type of the data. The present study, however, is disadvantaged with limitations with respect to sample size and does not consider other control variables such as the effect of the father or economic situation. In spite of this, the results presented here represent a useful contribution to enriching our knowledge about the effects of fatherlessness on adolescent growth, especially the local context of Trenggalek Regency.

These findings answer the research questions and fill the literature gap with regard to the impact of father absence on the adolescent development in the Trenggalek district. Significant differences in emotional and academic aspects indicate that fathers play an important role in supporting children's mental stability and educational performance. As such, family-centric interventions and psychosocial support programs for fatherless adolescents are urgently needed.

Overall, this study confirms that absent fathers have a highly significant impact on emotional and academic aspects, however, it does not demonstrate a significant effect on social aspects as well as self-confidence. This emphasizes the importance of broader social support from mothers, teachers, as well as a community support environment. This is one mode of protection against psychosocial risks in fatherless adolescents. Psychosocial intervention policies in schools and communities can focus on strengthening the two most vulnerable aspects: emotional

regulation and learning support, thereby ensuring that the development gap that exists between fatherless and non-fatherless groups may be reduced.

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample size was relatively small and limited to adolescents in Trenggalek Regency, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce response bias, as participants may not always provide accurate or honest answers. Third, this study did not explore other influencing factors, such as socioeconomic status, parenting style, or peer environment, which may also affect adolescent development. Therefore, future research is recommended to include a larger sample size and consider additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent development in relation to father involvement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined differences in developmental outcomes between fatherless and non-fatherless adolescents aged 10–19 years in Trenggalek Regency. The findings showed significant differences in emotional and academic aspects, indicating that fatherless adolescents tend to have lower emotional stability and academic performance. In contrast, no significant differences were found in social and self-confidence aspects. These results highlight the important role of father involvement in supporting adolescents' emotional and academic development. Therefore, family-based interventions and psychosocial support programs are needed, particularly for fatherless adolescents, to help minimize potential negative impacts.

This study contributes to the understanding of adolescent development by emphasizing family structure as an important factor influencing developmental outcomes. Future research is recommended to explore additional factors, such as parenting style, peer support, and socioeconomic conditions, as well as the role of alternative support figures in the lives of fatherless adolescents.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure

The authors declare that ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely to assist with language improvement and grammar checking during manuscript preparation. All scientific content, data analysis, interpretation, and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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