

## The Impact of the Loss of a Father's Role on a Daughter's Relationship Life Novita Sari<sup>✉</sup>

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### Keywords

father role, fatherless, daughter relationship, emotional development, interpersonal relationship, case study

### Abstract

*This study explores how the absence of a father figure—due to either death or divorce—shapes a girl's romantic relationships later in life. Using a descriptive case study approach, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with three women who all experienced being left by their fathers during childhood. Through these conversations, several recurring themes emerged, shedding light on the long-lasting emotional effects of growing up without a dad. The five key themes identified were: emotional dependence, a deep need for protection and acceptance, impulsive decisions around marriage, insecurity in relationships, and a tendency to seek a father figure in romantic partners. What's striking is that none of the participants described any positive or healthy impact this early loss had on their adult relationships. Instead, the absence of a father left a significant emotional gap, influencing how they connect with and trust men. The study highlights just how vital a present, loving, and supportive father figure is in a girl's life. A healthy father-daughter relationship helps shape a girl's expectations of men, teaches her how to build strong emotional bonds, and plays a crucial role in how she navigates love and intimacy as an adult.*

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## INTRODUCTION

These days, it's not uncommon to see young girls growing up without the love and support of their fathers—or even without the consistent presence of both parents. This emotional gap can take a serious toll on their mental well-being, affecting everything from emotional intelligence to how they form friendships and romantic relationships. A daughter's connection with her father plays a huge role in shaping her social and emotional identity. According to Lamb (2010), a father's influence goes far beyond financial support or discipline—he also contributes significantly to a child's emotional and social development. Research has shown that fathers impact many areas of a child's growth, including their cognitive abilities, emotional stability, social skills, and even physical development (Yuliana et al., 2023; Nisa et al., 2022).

When we talk about a father being involved, we're not just talking about him being physically present. Real involvement includes spending meaningful time, offering emotional support, engaging in open communication, and actively participating in the child's life. As Wahyuni et al. (2021) point out, the quality of this engagement matters more than just the number of hours spent together. A father's presence should be intentional and heartfelt. Girls who have strong, positive relationships with their fathers often grow up with higher self-esteem and a healthier outlook on romantic and social relationships (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). When a father is actively involved, he becomes a role model who helps his daughter develop a positive perception of men and relationships. As Biller (1993) explains, this influence can shape how girls choose their future partners and set the foundation for healthy love and respect.

Beyond physical care, meaningful father-daughter relationships involve guidance on emotional values and basic relationship principles. When girls feel seen, loved, and supported by their fathers, they're more likely to carry that confidence into the world. It becomes easier for them to protect their self-worth, maintain their dignity, and navigate their identity as women. Fathers who are consistently present and emotionally available—compared to those who are distant or barely home—play a far more impactful role in parenting (Istiyati, 2020). Fathers also play a big part in how girls develop a sense of self and understand gender roles. As Basuki and Indrawati (2017) note, children form lasting impressions of their parents' involvement, and these impressions can shape the way they relate to themselves and others. Eicher et al. (2018) found that girls who are supported and acknowledged by their fathers tend to be more confident and better equipped to handle future interactions, especially with boys.

On the flip side, the absence of a father—or a negative relationship with him—can leave deep emotional scars. It may create difficulties in trusting men, developing healthy boundaries, or maintaining balanced romantic relationships later in life (Allen & Daly, 2002). Girls often look to their fathers as their first reference for understanding what love and respect should look like. Grossman et al. (2002) highlighted that daughters with close father-daughter bonds tend to have more realistic and healthy expectations in marriage and romantic life. Fathers are often seen as problem-solvers, protectors, and sources of wisdom. When children know they can rely on their dads, they're more likely to feel secure and understood. Lubis (2022) emphasized that a warm, emotionally present father can reduce behavioral issues in children and build a more positive parent-child dynamic.

However, despite all this, the father's role is still often overlooked, especially in research. Most studies on child development focus heavily on mothers, particularly the mother-daughter bond. There's a noticeable gap in exploring how father-daughter relationships impact a girl's future—socially, emotionally, and romantically (Pruett & Pruett, 2013). Given the rise in issues like early pregnancies, abusive relationships, and low self-esteem in young women, researchers are now being encouraged to look more closely at the psychological effects of growing up without a father figure.

This study takes that step. Using a case study method, it dives into the personal stories of girls who lost their fathers—whether through death, divorce, or absence—early in life. Through in-depth interviews, it aims to understand how that loss has shaped their ability to form healthy, secure romantic relationships. By exploring these stories, the study hopes to shed more light on how the absence of a father can echo into adulthood and influence the way women connect, trust, and love.

**METHODS**

This study takes a qualitative, case study approach to explore the personal experiences of women who lost their father figures early in life. The research centers on three women, each with her own story, yet all sharing the same core experience: growing up without a father's presence.

The first subject is a 30-year-old woman who has been married twice and has three children from both marriages. She lost her father figure three years ago and has navigated her adult relationships without that foundational support. The second subject, aged 25, chose to marry a man without her family's approval—going so far as to elope, defying her mother's wishes. The third subject, just 23, also married a man her mother disapproved of and became pregnant before marriage. Her father left the family when she was only one year old due to divorce, leaving her to grow up without his presence. To better understand the emotional and psychological impact of these experiences, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with each participant. The data collected was then carefully analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns in how the absence of a father figure shaped their romantic decisions, behaviors, and perceptions of men.

A case study approach like this allows researchers to deeply examine real-life experiences in context. Rather than just collecting surface-level data, this method lets researchers explore the complexity of human relationships—how personal history, emotional loss, and family dynamics intertwine to influence present-day realities. As Creswell & Poth (2018) explain, this type of qualitative research offers rich, meaningful insights by placing each participant's story within its natural setting. Through detailed interviews and observations, researchers can better understand not just what happened, but why and how those experiences shaped the women's lives.

Table 1. Subject Data

Name	Education	Age	Status	Fatherless Status	Information	Married life
Subject 1 (DN)	S1	30 years	Marry	Left by father since age 3 (father died)	Married twice and both times were not approved by his mother, decided to marry without his mother's blessing.	Wanting to get divorced again in the second marriage, but it hasn't happened because the husband doesn't provide a living and is irresponsible, busy gambling and playing online games
Subject 2 (MJ)	S2	25 years	Marry	Left by father since 3 months old (father died)	His mother did not approve of his marriage, so he chose to elope.	Before choosing to elope, the husband was a security guard at a hotel in their city. He was aware that his mother would not approve because his prospective husband's job status was at odds with his educational status, and he often experienced domestic violence.
Subject 3 (IP)	SENIOR HIGH	23 years	Marry	Abandoned by father since age	Her mother did not approve of her	Her husband used to be a car rental entrepreneur, but had a

SCHOOL	1 (Father divorced mother and remarried 4 times)	dating, so she chose to get pregnant outside of marriage so that she would be approved.	lot of debt. Initially they had a car, but now they only have a motorbike. She often fights with her husband because of childcare and economic problems.
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## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the results of in-depth interviews with the three subjects, several themes emerged related to the influence of the loss of a father figure on their relationship patterns with men. This thematic analysis includes five main themes identified during the data analysis process, namely: *emotional dependence, search for protection and acceptance, impulsive marriage decisions, insecurity in relationships, and the search for a father figure through men.*

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Girls Who Lost Their Father Figure Since Childhood.

Theme	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
High Emotional Dependence on Men	Twice married and easily falls in love with men who pay little attention to her	Choosing to elope with a man who gives affection and attention promises a life of joy and happiness.	Choosing to get pregnant out of wedlock because she didn't want to lose her boyfriend at that time, who gave her great love and attention.
Search for seeking Protection and Acceptance	Often feel isolated and need more protection from her husband. But it was not obtained by either her first or second husband.	Getting acceptance from a man who makes her feel valued and accepted.	Searching for a lost father figure through pregnancy and forming a bond with a man she feels will provide protection.
Impulsive Marriage Decisions	When proposed to, she immediately accepted and decided to get married quickly without considering the background of her prospective husband and without her mother's approval.	Not considering the long-term consequences of their decisions and rather following emotional impulses to achieve momentary happiness.	The marriage had to be carried out immediately because she was already pregnant and was worried that it would have a negative impact on the extended family.
Insecurity in Relationships	Even though she has been married twice, she feels anxious and unsure about the stability of the relationship because her husband does not provide for her and likes to gamble and play online games.	Feeling insecure in her marriage because she chose her partner in a way that was not accepted by her family and often experienced domestic violence (KDRT).	Feeling that the relationship she was in felt unstable, considering the background of the decision taken without careful consideration. Especially after the bankruptcy of her husband's business and the family's economic disputes.
Searching for a Father Figure Through Men	She continues to look for a father figure in her husband in the hope of getting a sense of security and affection, protection and sustenance that she has not received from a father figure.	Tends to seek in this relationship protection and acceptance, as a father should provide.	Feeling like she has found a father figure from a man who loves and gives her attention, which she never got from her father and mother.

### **Theme 1: High Emotional Dependence on Men**

Bowlby (1982) explains through attachment theory that fathers play a crucial role in helping children build emotional security from a young age. When a father figure is absent, it often leaves a deep emotional void that can affect how a person forms relationships later in life. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) suggest that when there's instability or a lack of connection with a father, it can lead to a pattern of emotional over-dependence on romantic partners—where love becomes a way to fill the emptiness left behind. In these cases, people may turn to their partners not just for love, but also for the kind of emotional safety and affection they once needed from a parent.

This pattern was clearly seen in the first participant. She displayed a strong emotional dependency on her husband, constantly seeking his attention and validation. This wasn't just about love—it was about trying to replace the emotional gap left by her absent father. Hazan and Shaver (1987) explain that people with insecure attachment styles often look for partners to meet the emotional needs that were never fulfilled in childhood. Even after two marriages, the first subject still struggled with dissatisfaction and a lack of emotional fulfillment, showing how deep-rooted that void really was.

The second participant also reflected this pattern in a different way. Her decision to elope and marry someone her family didn't approve of seemed driven by a deep desire for love, acceptance, and emotional safety—things she might have expected from a father figure but never received. According to Laursen and Collins (2009), people who grow up without a stable father often make emotionally charged decisions in relationships, hoping to feel secure and valued. Her impulsive choice of partner revealed not only emotional neediness but also the consequences of lacking a healthy masculine figure in her life.

The third participant's emotional struggles became even more apparent when life didn't go according to plan. She experienced bouts of anxiety and depression—symptoms often linked to the loss of a father figure. Bowlby (1982) noted that such absence can lead to emotional instability and make it harder for individuals to feel safe in their social environments. This participant also frequently clashed with her extended family, hinting at deeper emotional wounds and a difficulty in forming healthy interpersonal connections. Cohen and Wills (1985) suggest that the lack of a strong father figure often contributes to loneliness and a struggle to build meaningful social bonds.

For the first participant, emotional over-reliance didn't just affect her romantic relationships—it also created distance within her family. After being scammed in an online business, she felt ashamed and isolated, pulling away from her extended family out of guilt and embarrassment. Rahayu (2023) notes that women who grow up without a father figure often struggle with decision-making, experience deep loneliness, and find it difficult to connect socially. In her case, emotional dependency on her partner wasn't a source of strength—it added to her isolation.

The second participant shared a similar experience. Her emotional dependence on her husband caused her to break ties with her family, as she carried guilt and conflict over her marriage. Research by Ramadhani et al. (2024) supports this, showing that girls who grow up without a father are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression, making it even harder to form stable and healthy connections with others.

Cahyani et al. (2024) further highlight the risks girls face without a father figure: not just emotional dependence, but deeper psychological struggles like chronic anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional instability. In this study, all three participants showed signs of inner turmoil—wrestling with fears about the future, feelings of hopelessness, and even suicidal thoughts (though none had acted on them). Their experiences show that the absence of a father affects far more than just their romantic relationships—it leaves a lasting mark on their mental health and their ability to form secure, supportive social bonds.

## **Theme 2: Searching for Protection and Acceptance**

According to Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory, parents—especially fathers—play a key role in helping children develop a sense of emotional security. When that father figure is absent, it often leaves a gap that children struggle to fill. Many try to meet that unmet need by forming relationships that offer a sense of protection and stability. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) explain that people who grow up without a father figure often seek out partners who can make them feel emotionally safe, even if those relationships aren't always healthy or stable.

This pattern was clearly seen in the first participant, a 30-year-old woman who had been married twice and had three children. Despite being in committed relationships, she still felt emotionally unfulfilled. She constantly relied on her husbands for validation and protection—signs of emotional dependency. Even after two marriages, she was still searching for the emotional safety and father-like support she never had growing up.

The second participant, 25 years old, chose to marry a man her mother didn't approve of. She hoped the relationship would bring her the acceptance, protection, and love she had long been missing. Laursen and Collins (2009) found that people who grow up without a stable father figure often turn to romantic partners to meet those emotional needs. In this case, even though her family opposed the relationship, she stayed in it because it gave her a sense of being wanted and appreciated—something she felt she never received from her father.

The third participant, only 23, decided to start a family by getting pregnant outside of marriage. On the surface, this may seem like a rash decision, but emotionally, it reflected her deep desire to create a sense of belonging and protection she had been missing since childhood. As Bowlby (1982) notes, people who grow up with emotional instability due to the loss of a parent often seek close relationships to feel grounded—even if those relationships aren't built on mature, stable foundations. In starting her own family, this participant seemed to be searching for a version of the love and safety she never had.

Research supports these patterns. Srinova (2022) found that teenage girls who grow up without father figures often struggle with low self-esteem, anger, and behavioral issues. The three women in this study all shared a sense of low self-worth. They frequently compared themselves to peers with “complete” families, and this often led to jealousy and sadness. Alfasma et al. (2023) noted that teens without father figures often feel depressed, stressed, guilty, and powerless. These feelings were echoed by all three participants, who sometimes blamed themselves for the difficult circumstances they found themselves in.

The impact of fatherlessness didn't just affect their romantic lives—it showed up in their family dynamics too. The first participant, for instance, fell victim to an online business scam. The resulting shame and isolation made her withdraw from her extended family. Rahayu (2023) found that women without father figures often struggle with loneliness, decision-making, and social interactions—something this participant experienced firsthand.

Similarly, the second participant cut ties with her extended family because of guilt and embarrassment over her marriage. The third participant also experienced tension in her family relationships, often clashing with relatives and struggling to connect emotionally. Her inability to maintain positive social ties reflected deeper emotional wounds stemming from her early loss.

Together, these stories paint a clear picture: the absence of a father figure in childhood doesn't just leave a void—it creates emotional patterns that can ripple through a woman's entire life, affecting her sense of self, her romantic choices, and even her ability to maintain healthy relationships with others.

### **Theme 3: Impulsive Marriage Decisions**

In their romantic relationships and decisions around marriage, both the second and third participants showed signs of impulsive behavior. This aligns with Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory, which emphasizes the crucial role fathers play in helping children develop emotional security. When a father is lost—whether through death, divorce, or emotional absence—it can leave a child feeling unstable and ungrounded. Without that sense of emotional safety, people may be more likely to make quick, emotionally driven decisions in future relationships, often in search of the love and protection they missed.

Laursen and Collins (2009) support this idea, explaining that individuals who grow up without a father figure often turn to romantic relationships for a sense of security. But because they're trying to fill an emotional gap, they might rush into relationships without fully thinking through the consequences. The first participant, for instance, showed a strong desire for stability. She married at a young age, seemingly to build a secure family life and to feel loved and grounded. As Kernberg (2004) suggests, those who grow up without a father may try to compensate for the emotional void by seeking out relationships that promise love, acceptance, and structure. Unfortunately, this deep emotional need can sometimes cloud judgment—leading the first participant to also fall for online scams promising quick wealth and a better future, without fully considering the risks.

The second participant's decision to elope with a man her mother didn't approve of also reflected emotionally driven choices. Even though the relationship lacked family support and long-term security, she prioritized her immediate need to feel accepted and validated. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) explain that those who've lost a father figure often gravitate toward relationships that provide emotional comfort, even if they involve risks or consequences they haven't fully thought through. Similarly, the third participant decided to become pregnant outside of marriage. While that choice may seem reckless on the surface, it's more accurately understood as an attempt to create love and belonging in her life. Coleman (2003) argues that people who grow up with emotional emptiness from a missing father figure are more likely to make impulsive relationship decisions, driven by feelings of loneliness and insecurity.

Research by Macini (as cited in Handayani & Kustanti, 2018) supports this pattern. It shows that girls raised without a stable father are more vulnerable to unintended pregnancies, low self-esteem, academic struggles, financial instability, and relationship challenges like divorce or unfaithfulness. Across all three participants, we see a clear pattern: their decisions often came from a deep emotional need for connection, safety, and acceptance—not necessarily from rational planning or long-term thinking. As Hazan and Shaver (1987) explain, people who have difficulty forming stable attachments may develop a tendency to make risky, impulsive decisions. In their quest to soothe emotional pain or fill a void, they may overlook the long-term impact those decisions could have on their lives. Ultimately, the stories of these women reveal just how much the absence of a father figure can shape not only their emotional landscape, but also their choices in love and life. It's not just about missing a parent—it's about missing the foundation that helps guide healthy, grounded decision-making in relationships.

#### **Theme 4: Insecurity in Relationships**

Attachment theory, as introduced by Bowlby (1982), highlights the vital role a father figure plays in shaping a child's emotional security and sense of safety. When a child grows up without that presence—whether due to death, divorce, or emotional absence—it can deeply affect their ability to form stable, healthy, and lasting relationships in adulthood. That lack of emotional grounding often carries over into romantic relationships, where feelings of insecurity and fear of abandonment can take root. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) emphasize that these early attachment

wounds don't simply fade with time—they often resurface in adulthood, especially in the way individuals connect with romantic partners.

The first participant spoke openly about feeling uncertain and anxious in her relationships—even after having been married twice. Her words reflected a deep emotional unrest, not just with her husbands, but within herself. Despite her commitment, she still questioned the stability of her second marriage, often clashing with her partner. These patterns reflect what Bowlby described: when a child doesn't have a stable father figure, they may carry that insecurity into future relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987) further explain how insecure attachment can lead people into a cycle of emotional highs and lows in relationships—often resulting in frequent conflict, doubts, or in extreme cases, a desire to escape altogether, even through thoughts of ending one's life.

The second participant also struggled with emotional security in her marriage, especially because her partner wasn't accepted by her family. This lack of support added another layer of instability to an already fragile relationship—one that unfortunately involved domestic violence. Her decision to stay in a relationship not supported by her loved ones could be seen as an attempt to seek the love and approval she missed from a father figure. But instead of healing the wound, it deepened her sense of isolation and insecurity. As Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) note, when people lack a sense of emotional safety in childhood, they may struggle to find it in adult relationships, often leading them to tolerate unhealthy dynamics just to feel wanted.

The third participant, too, revealed feelings of instability in her marriage—much of it rooted in impulsive decision-making and financial pressure. She entered a serious relationship quickly and became pregnant before marriage, hoping it would offer her the connection and stability she had always longed for. But instead, she found herself overwhelmed by emotional and financial stress. According to Laursen and Collins (2009), people who grow up with attachment wounds often find themselves in chaotic or troubled relationships as adults, driven more by the desire to feel loved than by clear, mature decision-making.

What all three women shared—despite their different paths—was a deep sense of insecurity. That inner uncertainty, often hidden behind relationship decisions, is something a present, loving father typically helps build resilience against. Bowlby (1982) believed that a father provides emotional structure—a kind of quiet reassurance that helps children grow into confident adults who can trust, love, and make thoughtful decisions. Without that presence, many struggle to build relationships grounded in trust and mutual respect.

In these stories, we see how the loss of a father figure doesn't just leave a gap in childhood—it can shape an entire emotional landscape, influencing how women relate to love, conflict, commitment, and even their own self-worth. Feelings of instability, fear, and the constant search for emotional safety become recurring patterns—often leading to relationship tension, poor decision-making, and a lasting uncertainty about their place in love and life.

#### Theme 5: The Search for Father Figures Through Men

In Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory, a father isn't just a parent—he's often a child's first model of protection, love, and emotional safety. This foundational bond plays a huge role in shaping how children later form connections in life. A secure attachment to a father figure can build confidence and help a child grow into an adult capable of forming healthy, balanced relationships. But when that father figure is absent—due to death, divorce, or emotional distance—it can leave behind a lasting emotional void. Often, this emptiness follows a person into adulthood, especially into their romantic relationships. As Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) explain, individuals who grow up without this source of love and security frequently seek it elsewhere—particularly in romantic partners—but may struggle to build relationships that are truly stable or fulfilling.

The first participant, who had been married twice, expressed a deep need for emotional safety—something she continued to search for in her current husband. Despite being in a committed



relationship, she looked to her partner not only as a spouse but also as a kind of replacement for the father figure she never had. Her desire for love, safety, and validation seemed rooted in a past that hadn't offered the emotional nurturing she needed. Hazan and Shaver (1987) note that this kind of emotional reliance is common among those with early attachment wounds—they often seek out partners who they hope will meet those unmet childhood needs.

For the second and third participants, the need for security and acceptance showed up in their decisions to be with partners their families didn't approve of. Their choices weren't just acts of defiance—they were emotional decisions, shaped by a deep yearning to feel safe, valued, and chosen. According to Laursen and Collins (2009), individuals who lack strong father figures often search for that sense of stability in romantic relationships, even if those relationships come with challenges or lack external support. In many ways, staying with a partner who offers love—regardless of family disapproval—can feel like claiming a piece of the emotional safety they never had.

The third participant took it a step further by choosing to have children and start her own family, believing that by doing so, she could create the emotional security that was missing from her own upbringing. Coleman (2003) argues that some people try to fill the emotional gap left by a missing parent by creating a new family structure—hoping that within it, they might finally experience the love and protection they longed for. But even with good intentions, this emotional need can make it harder to build healthy partnerships, especially when the roles of partner, parent, and protector become blurred.

This pattern—of looking to romantic partners to fill the role of a missing father—is not uncommon. Ramadhani et al. (2024) found that girls without a consistent father figure often seek out male partners who can serve as emotional stand-ins: someone to nurture, protect, and validate them. While these needs are completely human, the emotional weight they place on romantic partners can strain relationships and lead to dependence, conflict, or disappointment. Their research also highlighted broader impacts, such as difficulties in academic achievement and long-term struggles in forming healthy, reciprocal relationships.

The three women in this study each shared stories that echoed this same theme: the absence of a father figure had deeply shaped how they approached love and partnership. In their romantic relationships, they weren't just seeking connection—they were seeking a sense of safety, identity, and emotional grounding that had been missing since childhood. As Bowlby (1982) emphasized, when the emotional presence of a father is lost early on, it can destabilize future relationships. Without that early model of love and security, individuals may lean heavily on romantic partners to meet those unmet needs—leading to emotional dependency, fragile attachments, and sometimes, an ongoing fear of abandonment or conflict.

## CONCLUSION

The emotional dependence on male figures seen in all three participants of this study highlights just how deeply the absence of a father can affect a woman's emotional world. When a girl grows up without a father figure—whether due to death, divorce, or abandonment—she often carries that emptiness with her into adulthood. This study found that such absence can lead to recurring patterns like emotional dependence, the need for protection and validation, impulsive decisions around marriage, insecurity in relationships, and ultimately, a lifelong search for a father figure in other men.

One of the strongest patterns to emerge from this study is the consistent theme of looking for a father figure in romantic partners. All three women shared a tendency to seek out male partners who could offer them safety and a sense of emotional grounding—roles that should have been modeled

by their fathers. This shows just how powerfully the absence of a loving, present father can shape a woman's expectations of love and relationships. When that early model of trust and stability is missing, women may turn to romantic relationships to fill a role that was never meant to be filled by a partner.

That emotional reliance, however, often leads to impulsive decisions—especially around marriage. Each of the three women made major relationship choices driven more by a need for emotional security than by careful thought or long-term planning. Their stories show how a deep emotional void can push someone to prioritize immediate comfort over future consequences. This kind of emotional instability, when unchecked, can lead to unbalanced and sometimes painful romantic experiences.

Another theme that clearly surfaced is insecurity within relationships. That constant fear of being left, unloved, or not good enough often stems from the emotional instability created by the absence of a dependable father figure. The participants' need for approval, their struggles with trust, and their fear of rejection are all rooted in early unmet emotional needs. Instead of feeling grounded in love, they're left navigating adulthood while still searching for something—or someone—they lost as children.

All of these themes—emotional dependency, impulsive relationship decisions, insecurity, and the search for father-like protection in male partners—show just how interconnected early childhood experiences are with adult relationships. When the father's role is missing, the ripple effects are not just emotional—they can affect every part of a woman's life, from her sense of self-worth to the decisions she makes about love, family, and the future.

This study underscores the vital importance of a father's presence in a girl's emotional development. It shows how losing that presence can open the door to a range of psychological and social challenges—and how critical it is to create support systems for girls growing up without that influence. Whether through strong maternal figures, extended family, community support, or mental health resources, it's essential that we find ways to help these girls build the emotional stability they need to form healthy relationships later in life.

Ultimately, this study calls for greater awareness and support for girls raised without a father figure. It highlights the need for not only familial and societal involvement but also psychological guidance to help these young women grow into emotionally healthy adults. With more research and attention, we can better understand the long-term impacts of father loss—and more importantly, find ways to help heal the emotional wounds it leaves behind.

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