A systematic review of published literature examining the impact of father absence on adolescent identity formation

BY

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Abstract

Background

One of the major developmental crises an adolescent must overcome before becoming an adult is identity formation. Many studies focused on how the family influences the identity formation of adolescents, but little emphasis has been made specifically on how the absence of a father impacts the adolescent's development of identity.

Aim

This study aims to conduct a systematic review to examine the impact of absent fatherhood on the identity formation of adolescents.

Significance

Several studies, from the year 2010 to date, have explored the impact of father absence on the identity formation of adolescents. The majority of studies conducted have been mostly quantitative and failed to explore the experiences of adolescents raised in absent-father households during this crucial stage of development. This study sought to add to the body of knowledge and bridge that gap by exploring the possible (negative or positive) impact of absent fatherhood in the identity-formation period of adolescents.

Methods

This was a systematic review study that included a qualitative research design, whereby published literature and studies were identified through searching electronic databases. To synthesize and analyse the data, thematic analysis was used.

Results

This study's exploration discovered that absent fatherhood can be experienced both positively and negatively by adolescents. Positively, it was found that a sense of independency developed in the adolescent and strengthens family relations and unity, with extended family members or external role models becoming more involved in the upbringing of the adolescent. Significantly, on the negative side, adolescents

developed anger and resentment towards their absent fathers, questioning their absence and the individual's sense of who they are and where they belong.

Keywords: *Identity formation, absent fatherhood, impact, adolescents, family.*

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DECLARATIONS

I <u>Hope Aneliswa Fata</u>, student number <u>201501557</u> declare that this Dissertation titled "*A systematic review of published literature examining the impact of father absence on adolescent identity formation",* submitted for the award of Masters in Social Science in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Fort Hare, is my own work and has never been submitted for any other degree at this university or any other university.

Signature:

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DECLARATION ON PLAGIARISM

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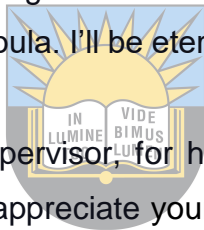
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem statement and Outline of the study

1.1 Introduction

The current chapter presents an overview of this study, giving a summary of the prevalence of father absence phenomena in the South African context and its effects on identity formation of adolescents. This is followed by outlining the research problem that motivated this study, the research objectives and the aim the study. This chapter further outlines the rationale or significance of conducting the study. Finally, the layout of the study is presented, followed by a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

Structural separation of fathers from children and families in South Africa is a result of political systems in which black people were systematically oppressed (Van Onselen, 1976). According to Van Onselen (1976), the roots of low rates of nuclear families, marriages and increase of father absence from households can be traced from a combination of colonialism, apartheid and urbanization, which have radically transformed family arrangements and roles over the last century (Van Onselen, 1976). In Southern Africa, people were forced into paid work by levying taxes that required local people to earn money by colonial powers (Van Onselen, 1976), while apartheid policies controlled the movement of people in ways that entrenched migrant labour and disrupted family life.

Research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Race Relations Institute (SARRI) over 5 years (2015 to 2020) revealed that "60% of South African children experience absent fatherhood. More than 40 percent of South African mothers are single parents". "In recent years, mother-headed families have accounted for 94 percent of caseloads for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)" (Popenoe, 1997). In Western countries, the proportion of children who live in single-mother families ranges between 1.5% in Belgium and 16.2% in America, while in Sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of children who live in mother-only families ranges between 10% in Nigeria and 34% in South Africa (Dlamini, 2006). The latest review of the research concluded that children who grow up with only

one of their birth parents are twice as likely to drop out of high school, 2.5 times as likely to become teen mothers, and 1.4 times as likely to be idle out of school and out of work compared to children who grow up with both parents (Popenoe, 1997).

The concept of identity has been approached in different ways. Several theorists have offered developmental models of identity (such as Erik H. Erikson, Jane Loevinger, and Peter Bios) (Kroger & Green, 1996). More studies conducted presently on adolescent identity are founded on James Marcia's ego identity status paradigm (Marcia, 1993). Researchers from different countries have studied identity status in populations, ranging from early adolescence to late adulthood (Marcia, 1993). Identity can be defined as the meaning attached by a person to him or herself as a person; it can be seen as a complex process of self-discovery, exploration of values, norms, and beliefs as well as many of the things we have been taught (Marcia, 1996).

Erickson (1960) described identity as a fundamental principle that develops continuously throughout life. It is a lifelong process that can begin from early childhood and continues throughout childhood to adulthood. Adolescents spend the majority of their time examining themselves and experiment with a variety of identities to examine themselves. They also identify themselves with certain occupations, ideologies, fantasies, and gender roles as well as modelling after their heroes or heroines whom they would like to resemble (Kroger, 2000). A good relationship with the family, parents, siblings and peers is linked with better emotional and psychological well-being of the adolescent. Interaction is considered influential in the formation of an adolescent's identity, especially the presence of a male figure for the adolescent (Kroger, 2000). Thus, the main reason for conducting this study is to investigate the influence of father absence on identity formation and whether the provision of male role models can benefit adolescents without fathers.

1.3 Research Problem

While there is insufficient literature on this topic in South Africa, mounting evidence suggests that growing up with an absent father has an impact on the life of an adolescent's gender role, the way they relate to the opposite sex, self-esteem and overall identity (Richter, 2006). According to Shaw (1932), perpetrators of violence and crime against females are considered likely to be those who come from absent-father homes; have had poor relations with their biological fathers or did not know their fathers. Morell and Richter (2006) found that girls with absent fathers are likely to have poor heterosexual adjustment and dissatisfying and violent sexual relationships. However, their study discovered that a drastic change takes place for good when there is a substitute male figure in the adolescent's life (Morell & Richter, 2006). Different men, including grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, foster fathers, older brothers, cousins, and other men may perform various fatherhood functions concerning the child (Desmond & Desmond, 2006). These men, singly or collectively, may be the child's primary source of male support (Mkhize, 2006). This indicates the impact of the father's absence in relation to adolescent identity formation and a need to introduce positive male role models.
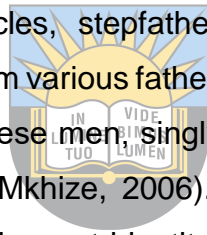
1.4 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- Does providing appropriate male role models to adolescents with absent fathers lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents?
- Can other male figures contribute to healthy identity formation in adolescents with absent fathers?

1.5 Research Methodology

This study followed a systematic review as methodology defined as a literature review designed to locate and uplift the best available evidence relating to a specific research question to provide information and evidence (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). A systematic review aims to provide a comprehensive and consistent analysis of the given topic across many studies and articles. Thus, a systematic review of literature was deemed appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to accumulate all available research and explored themes and trends from international as well as South African literature on the topic of father absence.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Psychosocial Development Model Erik Erikson

The theory of psychosocial development by Erik Erikson is crucial in the understanding identity formation of adolescents and highlighting the importance of paternal influence in this process. Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial model of human development is a widely recognized theory of identity (Erikson, 1960). In the 1963 publication, Erikson identified eight major crises that build upon each other during the lifespan, such that the outcomes of all childhood stages contribute to the establishment of identity during adolescence. For adolescents, the process of identity development can be stressful and lead to one feeling overwhelmed and unsure (Erikson, 1963). With a supportive environment, Erikson believed that the family is significant in assisting the adolescent through a crisis. Providing adolescents with a caring and accepting adult influence, whether by a parent or a relative, is critical in securing healthy identity development. The consistent and caring influence, and presence of adults in an adolescent's life ensure a smooth transition to adulthood (Erikson, 1963).

This study puts emphasis on the fifth psychosocial developmental stage, namely, the "Identity vs. role confusion" stage. In the model, the process is one in which individuals

explore roles and values and make independent decisions and commitments regarding occupation, religious, political, social beliefs, and interpersonal and sexual values (Erikson, 1963). Parents help their troubled teens develop a positive self-identity during this stage, as adolescents explore their independence and develop a sense of self (Cote, 2009). A father who models healthy lifestyle habits and skills to manage stress assists with the successful completion of this stage (Erikson, 1963).

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study was undertaken to review relevant peer-reviewed public literature on the impact of absent fathers on the identity formation of adolescents. There is a dire need for a study of this nature to be undertaken due to the rise in single female-headed households (Morrell et al., 2003). This study will also contribute to the body of knowledge whose work is to better understand identity crisis and how adolescents with absent fathers master or commit to a certain identity status. It is important to determine if there is enough research on the absence of fathers in their children's lives, and how this absence impacts the identity development of adolescents, specifically.

1.8 Definition of terms

Identity - The definition of identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you (Erikson, 1968).

Identity formation – also called identity development/construction is a complex process in which a human develops a clear and unique view of themselves and their identity (Marcia, 1966).

Absent Father - described as a biological father who is not present in the lives of his children while still alive. Fathers can be absent in the lives of children fully, partially, economically, or emotionally (Padi et al., 2014).

Transition- a process or a period of change from one state or condition to another (Marcia, 1966).

Role Model - Someone others look up to as a good example; someone who inspires others to imitate his/her good behaviour (Morell & Richter, 2006).

The above-defined terms are used throughout this study to understand the concepts defined.

1.9 Layout of the Study

This study has five chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction, background of the study, the problem statement, the research questions and the objectives of the study, the significance of the study and definitions of key concepts.

The second chapter consists of a review of literature related to the phenomenon under investigation and the theoretical framework that guides this study.

The third chapter presents the research methodology section. In this section, the research design and methodology that guided the study research process are outlined. The sampling technique, data collection method and data analysis techniques are presented in this chapter.

The fourth chapter presents the study findings. Graphs, tables, and figures are used to present the study findings and insights from the results.

Finally, the fifth chapter provides a discussion of the findings of the empirical literature, insights from the results and conclusions drawn from the study findings. Recommendations to management as well as recommendation to future researchers are presented in the chapter.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided an overview of the empirical study, which included a discussion of the background of the study, the problem statement, research aims and objectives, the significance of the study, a definition of the key terms and the outline of the research study. The next chapter provides a review of the literature related to the empirical study.

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Chapter 2: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Outline

This chapter explores literature surrounding the concept of absent fathers. The process of a literature review is critical in research as it enables the researcher to identify similar work done within the area of study, as well as identify knowledge gaps and areas that require further research (Ridley, 2012). The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to the phenomenon under investigation. This literature review begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins this study, followed by literature review. The literature review focuses on an in-depth understanding of the absent father phenomenon and its impact on adolescent identity formation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of gaps in knowledge and how this study aims to assist in increasing the body of knowledge when it comes to this phenomenon.
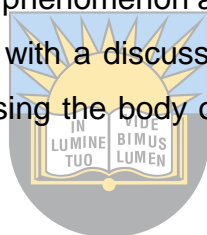
2.1 Introduction

The family is particularly important during childhood and adolescence, in the context of socialization. Thus, developmental scholars argue that initial identity is content based on feedback adolescents received from adults and other relatives, although adolescents incorporate new information into their identities as they grow older (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Eccles et al., 1993). Amongst studies conducted to investigate identity formation amongst adolescents, Schwartz et al. (2008) noted that identity formation is an intricate and multi-faceted process, making it a complex phenomenon to study. The following review of literature confirms that social identities of adolescents are constructed through interaction with significant others, and are also largely influenced by the social structures within which people are in constant interaction with (Sartor & Youniss, 2002). It is through such literature that insight is gained into how

adolescents navigate through the process of identity formation, as well as understanding the impact that paternal absence has on the identity development of adolescents.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

For the purpose of this study and to better understand the impact of absent fathers on adolescent identity formation, the following theory was chosen:

2.2.1 Psychosocial Development Model (Erik Erikson)

The current study focused on the first five stages of the eight developmental stages by Erikson. As the four stages build up to the core stage that this study is based on, which is Identity vs. Role confusion, the last three stages are briefly summarised as they do not impact the current study. For each stage discussed, the role of the father in influencing identity development is highlighted.

Erik Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial model of human development

Erik Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial model of human development is a widely recognized theory of identity (Erikson, 1968). In the 1963 publication, Erikson identified eight major crises that build upon each other during the lifespan, as that the outcomes of all childhood stages contribute to the establishment of identity during adolescence. According to Erikson, during the formation of a child's existence, he/she goes through several stages. The first stage that a child goes through is trust versus mistrust. This stage takes place during the first year of an infant's life. During this time, the infant is beginning to learn how to trust for the first time when the parent responds to his/her needs (Erikson, 1968). If a child is shown love and encouraged, a connection will be made between the parent and the child. The child learns to trust the environment, learns to trust himself, and trusts some of the people in his environment based upon

his needs being met. A child's developmental process depends on the environment and parenting styles of the parents (Erikson, 1968). According to Yogman et al. (2016), positive father-child relationships are associated with better cognitive, physical, physiological, and socio-emotional well-being in children. Although research mainly focuses on the role of the mother in early childhood development, Yogman et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of father engagement in child upbringing. Their findings posited that the father is more likely to be the infant's play partner than the mother, and that a father's play tends to be more stimulating, vigorous, and arousing for the infant (Lamb 2010; Yogman et al, 2016).

Autonomy vs. Shame

The second stage is autonomy versus shame. As children are approaching the first three years of life in this phase, they are developing physically and becoming more independent in exploring their world (Erikson, 1968). LeMonda et al. (2004) (cited by Yogman et al., (2016) report that interactions in the home predict children's early language and cognitive development at 24 months and 36 months, yielding support for a direct effect of father engagement on children's cognitive outcomes.

During this age group, the child learns how to walk, grasp, grip and manage his bodily functions all by himself, for instance, potty training. It is during this stage that father child play assists in the development of skills such as language development, attention regulation and cognitive outcomes (Anderson et al., 2019). When a child is not successful after several attempts at trying to grasp a particular skill, he/she becomes discouraged. Furthermore, when the parent puts down his child's accomplishments, efforts and attempts, the child develops feelings of shame and lowliness (VogelScibilia, 2009).

Initiative vs. Guilt

Initiative versus guilt is the third stage which takes place between ages three and six. The child becomes more active, takes on new projects, makes plans and manipulates the environment around him/her (Erikson, 1968). Yogman et al. (2016) gave an example of how at 3 years of age, father-child communication was a significant and unique predictor of advanced language development in the child.

A child also learns how to overcome challenges that he/she might face, mostly depending on the father to serve as a bridge with the outside world (Lamb, 2010). If a child is criticized or reprimanded instead of being encouraged and supported for being adventurous and exploring new things, he/she develops a guilty conscience, feelings of shame, dishonour and bitterness (Erikson, 1968).

Industry vs. Inferiority

From the ages of six to seven years old, the fourth stage of Industry versus inferiority comes in. The child learns to develop new skills that will help him/her become a well brought-up model and adult (Erikson, 1968). A child learns what it takes to care for himself as an individual, becoming productive and socially independent. If a parent is not there to guide the child through this stage and as a figure of authority and disciplinarian, the child does not grow to live up to the set norms and standards of society (Erikson, 1968). The child, instead, will feel as though he/she is insufficient, average, or lesser than others. Rules and guidelines are put in place by the parent to teach children how to cope with the standards of society regarding socially accepted behaviour and the pressure that may be experienced by peers (Erikson, 1968). According to Yogman et al. (2016), fathers engage in more roughhouse play, and their involvement in play with pre-schoolers predicted decreased externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems and enhanced social competence.

Once a child has gone through several years of rules, coupled with consequences for disobedience, he/she ends up learning how to make decisions alone and control his/her behaviour, and behave appropriately in society (Rothrauff et al., 2009).

Identity vs. Role Confusion

During puberty, the fifth stage namely, identity versus role confusion takes place. Childhood days are over, and the adolescent begins to take on more responsibilities developing into an adult. The adolescent explores what his/her identity is (Erikson, 1968). Yogman et al. (2016), purported that father engagement is correlated with reduced behavioural problems in male adolescents, decreased psychological problems in female adolescents, and decreased delinquency and economic disadvantage in families of low socio-economic status. An individual who develops a negative self-image during the earlier crises enters the fifth stage with a lack of trust, experiences of shame and doubt, and a sense of failure in competency as well as no sense of discipline. The key purpose of Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development is the resolution of an identity crisis (Erikson, 1963). In general, increased father involvement has been associated with improved cognitive development, social responsiveness, independence, and gender role development, particularly in adolescents (Yogman et al., 2016). Erikson's fifth stage, identity formation, is dependent largely on the successful resolution of earlier stages; therefore, it appears that identity is more dependent on parents, siblings and society (Erikson, 1968). The focus of this study is on the impact of a father's absence on adolescents during this stage.

Intimacy vs. Isolation

Stage Six is intimacy versus isolation. When the adolescent is approaching young adulthood, he/she begins to experience a series of issues and may begin to question

intimacy and significant other. Early father-daughter relations have been associated with a decreased risk of early puberty, decreased early sexual experiences, and decreased teen pregnancy (Yogman et al., 2016).

To form any relationship, a person must find a solution to his past problems and feel validated within his orientation and identity (Erikson, 1963). To develop a close relationship, both individuals must be willing to trust one another (Erikson, 1963).

Generativity vs. Stagnation

Stage seven is generativity versus stagnation. This stage is when an individual reaches middle adulthood between the ages of 35 and 60 years. It is important for an individual during this stage to stay active and involved (Erikson, 1968).

Integrity vs. Despair

The eighth and final stage is ego integrity versus despair. This stage involves adults who have begun to approach old age. During this stage, an adult may become more prone to depression and loss of hope because he/she will soon have to retire from his previous roles. Examples of these roles could be those of being a parent, grandparent, employee, and employer (Erikson, 1968).
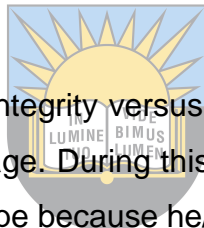
2.2.2 Discussion on the importance of family According to Erikson

In the psychosocial approach to identity, Erikson (1968) emphasized the importance of people in the immediate surroundings of adolescents, supporting, recognizing and assisting in the creation of an adolescent identity (Erikson, 1968). Erikson asserts that "unique and guaranteed formations of identity, bring about a sense of psychological well-being, as well as a sense of awareness of individual goals" (Erikson, 1968). Research in South Africa, and elsewhere, suggests a strong connection between success and education, which derives from the influence of stable families, where both parents are present (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). In addition, Sandhu et al. (2012) suggest that "parenting and family socialization experiences may have positive or negative

effects on a person's ability to work through the developmental issues of adolescence, effectively".

The independent qualities of a child all depend on values and behaviours a father instilled in the child when parenting. The upbringing of a child is greatly influenced by his/her parents and in the future, affects his/her adulthood (Rothrauff et al., 2009). Even though soon, a child desires distance between himself/herself and his parents, he/she will forever rely on the wisdom and guidance provided by a parental figure. The self-worth of a child is determined on the support given by his parents (Erikson, 1963). A sense of stability and well-being begins to take place when self-worth is developed. Challenges such as anxiety, lack of esteem and insecurity if the father does not show support towards his child. When fathers set boundaries, it creates a sense of responsibility and self-control within a child (Rothrauff et al., 2009).

Identity vs. Identity diffusion

Identity fluctuates during teenage years as adolescents actively explore alternatives by trying out various roles offered by their society. In their search for continuity and oneness with the environment, adolescents attempt to incorporate the morals and values learned in childhood with personal aptitudes and the opportunities offered in social roles (Erikson, 1963).

According to Erikson (1950), Identity achievement implies that individuals assess their strengths and weaknesses and determine how they want to deal with them. The adolescent must find an answer to the identity question: "Where did I come from?" "Who am I?" "What do I want to become?" Identity, or a sense of sameness must be searched for. "Identity is not something or an attribute given to the adolescent by society, it also does not appear as a maturity phenomenon when the time comes, as do secondary sex characteristics" (Erikson, 1950). Identity must be achieved through personal effort. Failure to work actively on one's identity formation comes with anxiety

and results in identity diffusion, which may result in isolation and a sense of confusion (Erikson, 1963).

The "Identity vs. Identity diffusion" stage, according to Erikson (1963), is a critical time to form a sense of identity during human development in adolescents; the conflict is centred on developing a personal identity. Completing this stage leads to a strong sense of self that will often remain throughout life (Erikson, 1963). As they grow out of childhood into adulthood, adolescents may begin to feel confused about themselves and how they fit into society. To see which role they play in the bigger world, they seek to establish a sense of self by experimenting with different roles, activities and behaviours (Erikson, 1963). According to Erikson (1963), this is important in the process of forming an identity and developing a sense of direction in life. For adolescents, the process of identity formation can present itself as a high-pressure time and may result in feelings of being overwhelmed and unsure. With a supportive environment, Erikson believed that the family is significant in assisting the adolescent through the crisis (Erikson, 1963). Providing adolescents with a caring and accepting adult influence is critical in securing a healthy identity development. The consistent and caring influence and presence of a father in an adolescent's life is one of the best ways to ensure a smooth transition to adulthood (Erikson, 1950).

In this stage, adolescents explore their independence and develop a sense of self. According to Cote (2009), different identities might be left with what Erikson referred to as *role confusion*. These adolescents are not sure about who they are. Therefore, they go from one job or relationship to another, uncertain about what they want. Instead of feeling a sense of direction in life, they feel disappointed and confused about their place in life, in the family and society (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson (1968) highlights the significance of people, especially parents, surrounding adolescents, being supportive and having sympathy for the identity-forming process.

Although Erikson (1968) states that it is difficult to find a clear role of parents throughout his theory, he does highlight that families need to be present and consistent in their interaction with children. This suggests that parents should be involved in the development of their children. Yogman et al. (2016) concur that "parenting determines the major characteristics of a child's life, namely, self-esteem, emotional development and behaviour habits, as well as others, which assists with societal survival". For the overall development of adolescents, families must be present to support adolescents, as this support affects their confidence and growth (Yogman et al., 2016).

According to Jackson et al. (2021), researchers perceive adolescent behaviour as influenced by family, friends, school the neighbourhood and the broader community. Parents are perceived to control parent-adolescent communication and monitoring. It would appear that problematic parent-adolescent communication is associated with increased risky behaviour (Wang et al., 2013). Kopko and Dunifon (2010) agree with the previous authors that healthy parent-child communication creates an environment that enables adolescents to feel comfortable in sharing information about their activities with their parents.

2.2.3 James Marcia's expansion on the work of identity by Erikson

James Marcia (1966) expanded on Erikson's theoretical conception of identity by identifying the statuses of psychological identity formation, namely; identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium and identity achievement. These statuses do not go in a sequence or step-by-step form, but rather are different responses to the exploration and commitment part of identity formation. Addressing Erikson's ideas of an identity crisis, Marcia (1966) noted that "the adolescent stage consists neither of identity resolution or identity confusion, but rather, the extent to which an adolescent has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains from career, religion, relational choices, gender roles, and so on". Crisis or exploration refers to a period of struggling and toiling to arrive at an important life decision, set goals, values,

beliefs, and as a time of upheaval where old values or choices are being re-examined (Marcia, 1966). The end outcome of a crisis leads to a commitment made to a certain role or value.

Marcia's idea of identity

The main idea proposed by Marcia (1966) is that a person's sense of identity is mostly determined by the choices and commitments made regarding certain personal and social traits. Commitment involves making firm decisions about identifying prospects and engaging in exploration directed toward the implementation of a certain identity style. In the diffused identity status, the adolescent has not committed to personal values or goals and has no interest in exploring options or possibilities for establishing these values (Marcia, 1966). In the foreclosed identity, the adolescent has committed to certain values and goals which are not based on personal exploration, but rather the absorbing of the values provided for by parents and relatives. The moratorium status is considered the true identity crisis. There is no commitment to values, and no goals have been reached, but the adolescent is actively searching and exploring possibilities (Marcia, 1966). Identity achievement is then achieved when the adolescent has made a commitment to certain personal values and goals after having gone through a period of exploration.

Marcia (1966) defined a crisis as "a time where old values or choices are being re-examined and the resolution of a crisis leads to a commitment made to a certain goal or value". Marcia's proposed identity statuses of psychological identity formation are part of identity formation. Marcia's perspective considers how much an adolescent has made certain choices, and how much he or she displays a level of commitment to these choices. "Identity also involves the adoption of a sexual orientation, a set of values and ideals and a vocational direction" (Marcia, 1966). In this phase, the support of a father plays a very crucial role in the process of establishing an identity. A secure attachment relationship, particularly with the father, allows the adolescent to

experience emotional support and internalize the rules and parental values (Pellerone & Micciche, 2014).

2.2.4 Marcia's model of identity

From Marcia's model, studies have explored the relationship between identity and personality variables such as social adaptation and relationships with parental figures. They discovered that adolescents in a state of identity diffusion displayed few psychosocial problems and establish an ambivalent relationship with their parents (Crocetti et al., 2008). The family, is, therefore, an important safe place for decision-making for an adolescent. This means that good family communication allows adolescents to discuss their options with their fathers, and act or make decisions based on advice received from the father.

When there is no proper communication, adolescents have fewer chances of going to their parents for advice (Crocetti et al., 2008).

According to Erikson (1950), parents and siblings influence the development of trust, autonomy and initiative, while society (schools, teachers, and technology) contributes to the development of the industry. However, concerning research associated with childhood and adolescent development, there has been a distinct lack of literature about paternal involvement in comparison to maternal attachment and influences (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Rohner & Veneziano (2001) suggest that lack of attention to fathers over the acknowledgment of motherly influence is due to society's generalized view that "mother's love is of superior importance". This view is largely due to the traditional gender roles and the view of mothers being the main parental figure in child rearing (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Phares (1992) concurs with this view and suggests that "lack of research about paternal influences on child and adolescent development, is due to the societal norm whereby the mother is the child's main caregiver".

Rohner and Veneziano (2001) explored the importance of fathers on children's development and well-being. They discovered that the role of fatherhood and his love is very important in the psychological development and health of children. This means, the impact of a present father on children potentially offers healthy psychological development, self-concept and development of personal values through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and may be a protective factor against the development of maladaptive behaviours and negative self-concept (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

It is, therefore, important to note that throughout Erikson's Identity vs. Role confusion and statuses by Marcia, parental involvement is certainly a key aspect to the achievement or development of a child. Rohner and Veneziano (2001) signify the points made by these two theorists and show that for proper child development and growth the family is crucial in facilitating of this as studies have pointed out how the absence of one can deter that development.
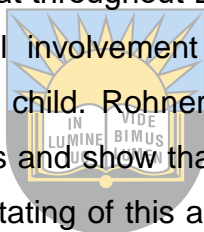
2.2.5 A Critic on Erikson's theory

Erikson believes that adolescence is a time in which identity normally becomes the key focus (Erikson, 1968). Erikson believed that identity was an ongoing process that captures ones succession throughout their entire life span. On the contrary, though he may agree that identity is an ongoing process, in his writings he does not give detailed comments with regards to identity's evolution throughout adult life. Thus it is unfair for him to extend his theory of identity beyond adolescent without providing sufficient information. His theory pays more attention to infancy and childhood than adult life (Rogers, 2018).

Another controversial aspect of Erikson's work on identity questions whether consideration for those adults who rediscovers themselves and develops a different understanding of their lives due to life change has been disregarded (Chapman, 2006-2013). Thus leaving an answered question of: is it possible for an individual to change and achieve an identity coherent to Erikson's identity achievement?

Again his theory focuses on social expectations found in some cultures and not in others. In most cultures adolescents think of themselves as part of a group before they think of themselves as an individual, the concept of adolescent thinking independently is not supported thus making identity achievement as Erikson stipulated not generalized to all cultures(Kaiser & Wilkins, 2010).

2.3 Literature Review

An extensive review of the literature regarding father absence and its impact on the identity formation of adolescents was carried out and various aspects of father absence were explored. These include how father absence is defined; types of absence; the role of the father within a family; and the various effects of father absence on the identity formation of adolescents.

2.3.1 Defining father's absence

An absent father is described as a biological father who is not present in the lives of his children while still alive. Fathers can be absent in the lives of children fully, partially, economically, or emotionally (Padi, et al., 2014). "However, fatherhood goes beyond mere father physical presence because a father might be physically present, but emotionally absent, or physically absent but emotionally supportive" (Morrell & Richter, 2006). Lamb (1987) distinguished fathering in three ways; paternal engagement (having direct time with the children and emotional engagement); being accessible (the

physical presence of a father in the home) and thirdly, being responsible (ensuring availability of care and resources).

Historically, the two most dominant father roles have been providing and/or caregiving. "Traditionally, fathers have been regarded mainly as providers. However, as a result of women's increasing entry into the work market, a new model of fatherhood has developed, which has emphasized the need for fathers to be involved in all aspects of parenting, including caregiving activities" (Morrell et al., 2003). Father-absence among black families is not a natural phenomenon but can be historically traced to slavery when white masters forced the break-up of families and resulted in an oppressed, absent and powerless black male. A female-headed home became the norm, not because it was desired, but because it was forced upon them (Morrell et al., 2003). Acceptance of this condition resulted in the adaptation of the absent father and single mother phenomenon.
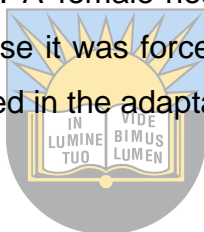
2.3.2 Types of Absence

To thoroughly understand father absence and its impact on adolescent identity formation, it is important to know and understand the types of fathers that can be absent in the child's life. Padi et al. (2014, p. 52) provide the following types of father absence: absent and unknown; absent but known; absent and undisclosed and unknown and deceased

- **Absent and unknown** – This type refers to instances where the adolescent has very little or no information about their father or they have never met the father before.

- **Absent but known –** This type looks at, physical presence of the father, the amount of time spent with the child, and thirdly the overall emotional engagement with the child.

- **An absent and undisclosed father-** This is a situation in which the mother does not tell the child who the father is or provides incorrect information about him.

- **Unknown and deceased** - This is a father who died while the child was very young. The adolescent does not have any memories of the father, and therefore felt that he/she did not know him.

Research indicates that father absence can be defined in numerous ways by different authors. For the purpose of this study, absent but known fathers are defined as biological fathers who were physically available during childhood, yet emotionally absent. This includes "not being supportive in personal problems of the child, showing lack of interest in the child's schoolwork, being uninvolved with the child's plans and being perceived as untrustworthy, failing to express his love and acceptance accordingly and his interactions with his child lack warmth or sensitivity" (Padi, et al, 2014, p. 52).

According to Meeker (2006), "the most important factor in a daughter's life is her father. The quality of a daughter's relationship with her father has a significant impact on the formation of her personality, her level of self-esteem, happiness, confidence and the choices she makes in life" (Meeker, 2006). The boy child, on the other hand, learns how to resolve conflicts and approach situations by watching his parents; therefore, fathers are more important for the development of socially acceptable forms of behaviour that do not include violence and aggression (Popenoe, 1996).

2.3.3 The Role of the father within the family

Culturally and in society, it is expected that fathers are instrumental in providing and seeing to it that their families are looked after in terms of necessities like food, shelter and other needs (Benokraitis, 2011). A father's role is also that of providing security. Due to the presence of the father, the home becomes a source of assurance, discipline and order (Benokraitis, 2011). The home is mostly regarded as an environment where the adolescent is exposed to learning and accumulating wisdom. Most Africans believe that a child who fails to learn respect for authority at home will face difficulties in the outside world (Benokraitis, 2011). A father's role is vital to adolescents, irrespective of their gender. In some African traditions, it is the father's responsibility to send their sons to initiation school, to transform them into men and portray a good example of how a man or a husband should be (Benokraitis, 2011). For adolescent girls, a father's responsibility is to protect, provide and model to the girl how a good husband and father behaves. The impact of fathers' presence on their children's development can be noticed as early as the period after the child's birth. Paternal engagement decreases boys' negative social behaviour (delinquency) and girls' psychological problems in early adulthood (Benokraitis, 2011). The fathers' financial support, apart from engagement, can also influence children's cognitive development.

2.3.4 The Importance of Father Engagement

Father involvement refers to the positive involvement a father has with his children.

This includes observable behaviours, as well as cognitive aspects of involvement. Father involvement is both direct and indirect (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). "Having an involved father living at home can make a big difference in the life of a young child in South Africa". For instance, growing up in a household with a present father is likely to be better (Desmond & Desmond, 2006). Previous research has explored influences on father engagement with their children. In a study of fathers' perceptions of their parenting roles in a low-income setting, Bryan (2014) found that fathers perceived their parenting role (the provider role) as downplaying the importance of social and emotional aspects of being a father, whom they reported to be an influence in the disengagement of their children (Bryan, 2014).

While researchers have examined the effects of father absence on child development outcomes, little is known about the effects of non-resident fathers' involvement on identity formation. Peacock et al. (2008) argued that "the engagement or presence of a father or father figure in the life of a child positively affects the child's life prospects, academic achievement, physical and emotional health and linguistic, literary and cognitive development".
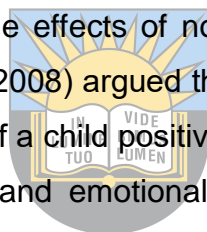
Researchers on fatherhood in South Africa have argued that "the presence of a father in the household is associated with positive outcomes for children, such as the adolescent's improved access to resources in the community increased protection, and higher levels of household expenditure" (Redpath et al., 2008; Richter & Morrel, 2006).

The dominant view in existing literature on this topic is that "children growing up without fathers may have difficulties transitioning into adulthood due to a lack of positive male role models" (Mather, 2010). Several studies focusing on the impact of father absence on adolescents have been conducted. Molongoana (2015), Herbert and Princess (2017) and similar authors explain that "children growing up in single-parent homes are deprived of a live-in gender role model and financial security". They further state

that children with absent fathers are at a disadvantage, academically and emotionally (Molongoana, 2015).

In a study by Molongoana (2015), titled "The Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grew up without a father, it is highlighted that fathers have significant roles in families and within their daughters' lives. This is especially true in the area of financial provision and in the daughter's capacity to develop healthy romantic relationships. Consistent with the findings of other research, the findings of this study suggest that daughters in single-mother homes live in poorer households than in homes where there is a dual income. In terms of relationships, daughters with absent father figures found it difficult to relate to men (Molongoana, 2015). This makes it difficult for them to establish healthy romantic relationships.

In addition to these authors' perspectives, Barker and Ricardo (2005), as referenced by Dickerson Cory (2014), state that, young men in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa participate in violence to gain power and find male role models, surrogate fathers, and substitute families with their male peers. Due to the father's absence, these young men may lack a sense of power and masculinity, and search for it in conflict and violence (Dickerson, 2014).

Chikovore and Makusha's (2010) systematic review of fatherhood in South Africa revealed an alarming statistic about absent fathers. According to Richter et al. (2010), South Africa has the second highest rate of father absence in Africa. Furthermore, studies suggest that most South African children do not experience a positive relationship with their fathers due to lack of support and care given (Richter et al., 2010). Grange (2013) noted that the absence of a father in a child's life, physically or emotionally, can profoundly disadvantage the child in adulthood. Global research reported that children growing up without fathers are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to education, employment, behaviour and relationships. Boys growing up in absent-father households are more likely to display "hyper-masculine" behaviour,

including aggression, while girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have low self-esteem, engage in risky sexual behaviour, and have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships (Grange 2013).

Rahgozar et al. (2012) agreed on the fact that family health variables would predict identity development and that attachment and separation or individualization would each make a particular contribution to identity development. Soenens and Beyers (2012) also discovered that secure parent-child relationships, independence training and encouragement of independence can result in the development of a healthy sense of identity. This all means that when the parents give the adolescent enough freedom to ask themselves questions, explore and experiment while also being there as sounding boards, the adolescent will be able to develop a healthy mind space to make informed decisions, as well as develop an identity that will last them a lifetime. By reviewing more research, it is becoming clear that parenting and identity are significantly interlinked (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). Studies show that parents can either be helpful or hinder the process of identity formation.

Though many studies highlight the negative impact of an absent father figure, some emphasize that though this may be true, in certain instances a father's absence can be positive for the growing child. Popenoe (1997) in his study Life without father was quoted saying, "On the face of it, there would seem to be at least one potentially positive side to fatherlessness: Without a father around the house, the incidence of child abuse might be expected to drop. Unfortunately, reports of child neglect and abuse have skyrocketed since 1976". Most perpetrators of sexual abuse are men, but less than half of the offenders are family members and close relatives. In addition, 10 to 30 percent are strangers, and the remainder are acquaintances of various kinds, including neighbours, peers and mother's boyfriends (Popenoe, 1997).

Malose Langa, in his 2014 study titled "Meaning Making in Growing Up Without a Father: Narratives of Young Adolescent Boys" also highlighted that some of his

participants did not focus on the fact that they did not have present fathers; rather, they were optimistic about their academics and future. For some, growing up without a father motivated them to desire to be better fathers themselves.

"Despite growing up without fathers, these boys embraced masculine voices that were non-violent, non-risk taking, and school orientated. The study proved that academic success is the main protective factor in mitigating participation in risk-taking behaviours. This group of adolescent boys saw pursuing academic work as an investment in the future and as a possible means to break the cycle of poverty in their lives in Alexandra Township. Interestingly, all the participants also spoke about wanting to be 'different' fathers as compared to their absent fathers".

Barber and Eccles (1992) also noted that being raised by a single mother can have positive results on adolescent psychological well-being. This can result from positive role modelling, promotion of positive adaptive coping mechanisms, and demonstration of personal strength and financial independence. This, in turn, can result in adolescents seeking financial autonomy and having high career aspirations. In addition, if a single mother needs to work full time, more responsibility may be placed on the adolescent to maintain the household, thus promoting responsibility, family values, personal strength and independence (Barber & Eccles, 1992).

Richter et al. (2011) also noted that one of the biggest influences of an involved father is that he gives credibility and encouragement for educational achievement; as a result, children stay longer at school and achieve far more if their fathers support them in education. This indicates a need for a deeper understanding of the topic of absent fathers, more especially on the identity formation of adolescents.

2.3.5 Other male family figures in different cultural contexts

In literature available on fatherhood, it is acknowledged that the roles of fathers are influenced by certain aspects as postulated by Day and Lamb (2004): 1) the structure

of families (including marriage, paternity and co-residence); 2) the quality of primary relationships (including the quality of the marital relationship; 3) the relationship with the child's mother; 4) relationship with the father's father; 5) the type of involvement and fathering relationship with the child; 6) support; 7) financial status (employment and income); and 8) personal qualities (personality, health, educational level, parenting style, beliefs about the father's role and cultural background) (Lamb, 2000)

A father's role has traditionally been defined as that of provider or breadwinner, having responsibility, as well as for moral oversight of children and gender role- modelling (Lamb, 2000). In many cultures, the concept of being a father and/or fathering does not necessarily focus on the character or role of one individual. In some cultures, being a father is viewed instead as a collective responsibility in keeping with traditional patterns of extended family formation (Mkhize, 2004). Many households in South Africa are not occupied by the nuclear family but by relatives, extended families and more. Children in such families are exposed to multiple adult figures all of whom participate in child-rearing to a greater or lesser extent (Townsend, 1997). According to Roy (2008) fatherhood occurs in the context of intimate social relationships in which men may play a significant role in parenting, including children who are not biologically their own. Different men, including grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, foster fathers, older brothers, cousins, and other men may perform various fatherhood functions concerning a child, and these men, singly or collectively, may be the child's primary source of male support (Mkhize, 2006). The absent father phenomenon cannot be understood as a one-dimensional phenomenon. This complex phenomenon is constantly influenced by factors such as materialist constructions of fatherhood and masculinity, socio-economic factors such as poverty and unemployment of fathers as well as cultural factors. Furthermore, it may be influenced by relationship issues of different types (Mkhize, 2006). Hence, the effects cannot be understood without considering all the above.

This highlights that more emphasis needs to be put on understanding the role of these father figures and how strengthening this can assist an adolescent without a father to navigate through identity without crises.

2.3.6 Why Erikson?

In the reviewing of literature on identity there is limited or little agreeing on how to identify "identity"? Erikson was one of the first theorist to propose life span model of human development, which included eight developmental stages that succession to the next stage relied on the successful resolution of conflict or crisis of a particular stage (Erickson, 1968). This played a huge role in this study as it was important to understand what impact the involvement of a present parent more especially a fathers in the stages leading up to the 5th stage of identity vs. role confusion resulted in.

Erikson (1968) believed that seeds of identity are planted at a young age when the child recognizes himself as a unique being separate from his parents, and as the child matures they take on characteristics and admired traits of their parents which Erikson labelled IDENTIFICATION. With that in mind it was crucial for this study to understand that without the involvement of parents identification would not be possible thus the child would experience what Erikson termed role confusion where the adolescent questions their personality traits their view of oneself and perceived view of others. As a result the adolescent experiences doubt regarding the meaning and purpose of their entire existence, resulting to a sense of loss and confusion (Bosman et al. 1994). Erikson emphasized the importance of culture in parenting practices and motivations. He ascertained that we are aware of what motivates us throughout life, and we make conscious choices in life which focus on meeting specific social and cultural needs rather that biological needs only (Erikson, 1959).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework of this study and linked it to Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory. In this literature review, a detailed discussion of previous literature was conducted, forming a link to the current study, addressing concepts of father absence and its types, the traditional role of a father, identity formation, parent involvement, and adolescence. The above discussion makes it evident that the father's absence is a complex issue. It can be said that children raised by both parents may be similarly deprived of certain experiences and would also experience challenges like those raised in single-parent homes when the extent of father involvement is closely looked at.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter reviewed literature and theoretical framework, the present chapter introduces the research methodology of this empirical study. Klassen et al. (2012) described research methodology as strategies and methods of data gathering, analysis and reporting. Similarly, Baker (2000) viewed research methodology as an outline of the steps on how, where and when data is collected and analysed. With this in mind, this chapter presents the description of the overall research process, as it provides information concerning the method that was used in undertaking this project as well as reasons behind the use of selected tools. In so doing, the study design and units of analysis are discussed. The chapter also includes discussions on the structured, systematic process of literature review applied within the study. Thereafter, technical aspects of the research process are highlighted, including the methods of collecting the data, evaluating the data, and analysing the data. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues considered in this study.

3.2 Research methodology

What is Systematic Review?

A systemic review is a research method that synthesizes already existing data on a particular topic. It is different from a traditional literature review because it goes beyond the subjective and narrative reporting characteristics by using procedures to thoroughly extract data from multiple studies that are appropriate to be part of the review. Studies used in a systematic review are assessed for their quality (Moola et al., 2015).

A systematic review, which involves a critical summary of the results of the available literature on a particular topic or question, was utilized in this study. To improve scientific writing, the methodology is shown in a structured manner to implement a

systematic review. A systematic review uses several methods for data synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study used thematic analysis, which focuses on examining themes within data. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain thematic analysis as identifying and reporting patterns (themes) within data as well as providing various interpretations. The principal aim of this study was to explore existing literature and summarize the findings as presented by the data.

3.3 Study Design

This review was conducted within the framework of qualitative research design. A systematic review of published literature can be defined as a literature review designed to locate and uplift the best available evidence relating to a specific research question to provide information and evidence (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). A qualitative approach allows the researcher to gain a "rich and contextual description and understanding of phenomena" (Roberts & Ilardi, 2005, p 32). A systematic review aimed to provide a comprehensive and consistent analysis of the given topic across a large number of studies and articles. Thus, a systematic review of literature was deemed appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to accumulate all available research and then explored themes and trends from South African literature on the topic of father absence and its impact on adolescent identity formation. Exploratory research refers to gaining a better understanding concerning the depth of the phenomenon rather than through a solution to the problem (Dudovskiy, 2016).

3.4 Units of Analysis and Sampling Procedure

In this systematic review approach, evidence from individual qualitative and quantitative studies were integrated to facilitate further insights into a phenomenon. This was achieved by relating perceptions and results from various resources which converged on the same area of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). The inclusion criterion for this study focused on empirical studies which examined adolescent identity development according to Erickson's theory of psychosocial development, and

specifically, those that examined the impact of absent fathers on adolescents were considered in identifying the relevant studies for the review. Only freely available, peer reviewed, full-text articles in English published between 2010 and 2022, were included. For study characteristics, the researcher looked at studies availability, publication year, and geographic region of the study, journal, study focus and child age group.

3.5 Steps for Conducting a Systematic Review

The review process should be well developed and planned to reduce bias and eliminate irrelevant and low-quality studies. These steps were used in the gathering, analysis and reporting of the data in this research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps for implementing a systematic review include:

Step 1: Framing questions for a review

The problems to be addressed by the review should be specified in the form of clear, unambiguous and structured questions before beginning the review work. Once the review questions have been set, modifications to the protocol should be allowed only if alternative ways of defining the populations, interventions, outcomes, or study designs become apparent (Khan et al., 2003).

Framing questions for a review using PICO Model

Before commencing with the search, it is important to have a well-built question. One way to construct a well-built question is to use the PICO model that refers to the population under study (P), the intervention or treatment being evaluated (I), the comparison of that intervention (C) and the outcomes (O) (Page et al., 2020). Providing a well-formulated question is important since it provides the main reason for carrying out a systematic review and guides many parts of the review process, such as the selection of the study, search strategies and data extraction (Page et al., 2020). Once the question to be answered has been decided upon, the protocol for resolving it should be established. The protocol establishes the working methodology and the

criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of the works to be analysed (Page et al., 2020). The search for information aims to be as extensive as possible to be able to find all the relevant studies without involving an amount of information that is difficult for the researcher to handle.

Table 1.1: The PICO Model

Patient/Population	**I**ntervention	**C**omparison	**O**utcomes
Who is your patient? • Age, sex, race or patient • Primary problem • Health status	What do you plan on doing for the patient? • Diagnostic test • Medication • Procedure	What alternative are you considering? • Another test, medication or procedure • Watchful waiting	What do you wish to accomplish? • Accurate diagnosis • Relieve or improve symptoms • Maintain function

For this study, the PICO question is as follows:

P- Adolescents with absent fathers

I - Providing appropriate male role models

C- (For the purpose of this study, there is no comparison)

O- Healthy Identity formation

With the guidance of the PICO framework the study question was established to be: **Does providing appropriate male role models to adolescents with absent fathers lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents?**

Step 2: Identifying relevant work

The search for previous studies on the topic was extensive. Multiple trusted resources (both computerized and printed) written in English were searched to find relevant published literature to be used in gaining data for this study. The study selection criteria flowed directly from the review questions and specified *a priori*. Reasons for inclusion and exclusion were recorded (Khan et al., 2003). The intended population in this study is South African published literature, as this study is sought an understanding of the impact of absent fathers from a South African point of view. Open free literature sources were used for the current investigation.

Primary avenues included making use of peer-reviewed articles, academic journals and libraries. Furthermore, cross-referenced data were consulted if relevant information was restricted. For this investigation, available electronic databases (Wiley Online Library, Springer, PubMed), Google Scholar, hand-searching for key resources, asking personal contacts and experts in the field for relevant authors were explored. Literature was sourced using the following keywords: Adolescents; Paternal function; absent fathers; Identity Formation; Theory of Psychosocial Development; Identity Statuses. These terms were used consistently and simultaneously (e.g., adolescent identity formation + absent fathers).

Criteria for eligibility of literature

This section details the criteria for the inclusion of literature in the study. As such, research parameters are defined. These are accounted for in the eligibility criteria, which comprise the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Higgins and Green (2008) provide

specific guidelines for considering eligibility criteria with regard to including or excluding literature in systematic literature reviews. These guidelines allow the investigation to be repeated and/or updated (Palinkas et al., 2008).

Inclusion criteria

- Freely available, peer-reviewed, full-text articles in English, which were published between 2010 and 2022.
- Studies that employed Erikson's understanding of identity development.
- Studies which explored the absent father phenomenon and its impact on adolescents.
- Literature which highlighted the difference in growing up in a household without male influence and growing up in a household with substitute father figures; and
- Studies exploring substitute male figures (uncles, grandfathers, role models, influences) for adolescents without present fathers.

Exclusion criteria

- Unpublished literature.
- Studies older than 10 years.
- Studies focusing on one aspect of identity formation such as social identity, or religious identity.
- Articles that do not explain identity from an Ericksonian definition.
- Articles that highlight father absence as a result of Rape or Death.
- Articles that do not base theoretical view of identity from Erikson or Marcia paradigms.
- Literature which evidences stereotypical racial views on the absent father phenomena (e.g. negative stereotyping of father denying responsibility or certain racial groups).

For this study, the inclusion criteria explored adolescents with absent fathers as the type of population that is the main focus of this systematic review. Secondly, it focused on studies that explored the role that positive father figures played. Lastly, the criteria sought studies in which the context focuses on adolescent identity formation. Studies considered for this review needed to have employed Erikson's work as it was crucial to understand the impact of parental involvement more especially fathers in the developmental stages as presented by Erickson. Also studies that were considered for this study must have been conducted in South Africa from the year 2010 going forward. Studies before 2010 were not considered for this review except for studies that highlighted the works of Erikson and absent fathers. Only published literature was considered for this study. The PRISMA flow chart below illustrates the steps taken to identify the final 9 articles which were used in the review.

PRISMA Flow Diagram

The flow diagram depicts the flow of information through the different phases of a Systematic Review. It maps out the number of records identified, included and excluded, and the reasons for exclusions.
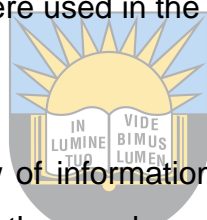
A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Table 2: PRISMA flow chart

Identification	Records Identified from*: PsycINFO, Google Scholar keyword search Keywords: Adolescents; Paternal function; absent fathers; Identity Formation; male role models ;Theory of psychosocial development; Identity Statuses. 105 articles, title and abstracts Reviewed	→	Records removed *before screening*: Duplicate records removed (n = 30) Records removed not published in English (n =20)
Screening	Studies screened (n = 55)	→	Studies excluded Reason1: Were mostly chapters From published literature. Reason 2: Were older than 1990 (n = 10)
	Articles assessed for eligibility (n = 45) Articles used in the introduction and other chapters =29	→	Articles excluded: Reason 1: Were not on the topic of Father Absence (n = 3) Reason 2: Emphasized on Financial absence of father (n = 3) Reason 3: Did not mention identity formation (n= 10)
Included	Studies included in review (n =9) Reports of included studies		

The steps followed in the PRISMA flow chart above, resulted in the following nine articles in Table 3 below, which formed the final sample of the study.

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Table 3: Articles reviewed for the study

Author (S)	Study Topic/ Title	Methodology
ThupayagaleTshweneagae, G., Mgutshini, T. & Nkosi, Z.Z. (2012)	Where is my Daddy? An Exploration of the Impact of Absentee Fathers on the Lives of Young People in Botswana	A qualitative study focus group discussions Content analysis
Harker-van Heerden, M. (2018)	The effects of parental involvement on identity styles of adolescents	Quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research Self-reported questionnaire
Leah East, L., Jackson, D., O'Brien, L. (2006)	Father absence and adolescent development: a review of the literature	A qualitative study Content analysis
Molongoana, K.R. (2015)	Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grew up without a father	Thematic analysis. Semi structured open-ended interviews
Tau, R.G. (2020)	The Perceived Impact of Absent Fatherhood: An Exploration of Young Adults' Experiences of Father Absence.	A qualitative research design Purposive sampling Semi-structured interview Thematic analysis

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Langa, M. (2014)	Meaning Making in Growing Up Without a Father: Narratives of Young Adolescent Boys	Qualitative design and used interviews to collect data.
Mkhize, N. (2006)	African traditions and the social, economic and moral dimensions of fatherhood. *Baba:* men and fatherhood in South Africa	Qualitative design.
Padi, T., Nduna, M., Khunou, G. & Kholopane, P. (2014)	Defining absent, unknown and undisclosed fathers in South Africa. South African Review of Sociology	Qualitative design and used semi-structured interviews to collect data.
Zirima, H. & Gadzikwa, P. (2017)	Experiences of female university students who grew up in father absent homes.	Explorative case study design and used semi structured interviews to collect data.

Step 3: Assessing the quality of studies

Study quality assessment is relevant to every step of a review. Question formulation (Step 1) and study selection criteria (Step 2) described the minimum acceptable level of design. Selected studies were subjected to a more refined quality assessment by use of general critical appraisal guides and design-based quality checklists (See Appendix 3) (Step 3). These detailed quality assessments were used for exploring heterogeneity and informing decisions regarding the suitability of the review (Step 4). In addition, they helped in assessing the strength of inferences and making recommendations for future research (Step 5) (Khan et al., 2003).

Step 4: Summarizing the evidence

A critical analysis of all the quality of the studies identified as relevant and appropriate for the review question was conducted. The analysis aimed to break down the studies into different components and look at how they relate to each other. This process of synthesizing the studies extracted data from individual studies modified particularly to the requirements of each review. Data extraction forms (see Appendix 1) were used to enable the researcher to explain the nature of the study (Briner & Denyer, 2012).

In terms of the data analysis for this research study, the qualitative analytic method used is a form of thematic analysis known as interpretive thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a type of research method used to provide a rich and detailed account of data. This is done by identifying, analysing and reporting patterns, known as themes, found within the specific study data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of thematic analysis is described by Braun and Clarke (2006) in six phases used for this research. The phases are briefly mentioned here as follows: familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interpretive thematic analysis moves away from simply identifying surface-level themes to asking: what these themes mean concerning the broader context and theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study considered what these themes meant using the theory of psychosocial development by Erik Erikson, as it is crucial in understanding the identity formation of adolescents and highlighting the importance of paternal influence in this process.

For this study, this step consisted of systematic reading of the chosen articles. The reading of the articles was systematic but also in-depth and engaged. Throughout the reading of the articles, special attention to terms, concepts, definitions, and themes that were repeated in the studies was given (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process

allowed for a move to the next phase of the thematic analysis, which is searching and reviewing themes. Themes refer to identifiable ideas that link to each other emerging from the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of searching for themes involved clustering/grouping of commonly used terms, definitions and ideas in different articles that held the same concepts and showed revealed themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 5: Interpreting the findings

Factors highlighted in each of the four steps above were realized before producing the final mini-dissertation. There are systems in place such as journals and websites that make it easy for practitioners to access results of systems reviews (Page et al., 2020). The risk of publication bias and related biases were explored. Exploration for heterogeneity helped determine whether the overall summary could be trusted. Recommendations were graded by reference to strengths and weaknesses of the evidence (Khan et al., 2003). The discussion of themes for this study links with the main research question and sub-questions of this research study. Producing the findings of the thesis involved giving an interpretation of the findings by discussing themes more and referring to the different studies.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the study

The standard for thorough and quality qualitative research is to strive for what is termed as 'trustworthiness' to ensure the analysis is accurate and objective. According to Merrian and Tisdell (2016), it is important to discuss the standards of being thorough concerning qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that the trustworthiness of a study can be checked using the following criteria; 1) Credibility, 2) Transferability, 3) Dependability and 4) Confirmability. These will be briefly discussed in this study.

Credibility refers to the quality of being trusted, convincing and believable. Shenton (2004) refers to credibility as the question of how congruent are the findings with reality (Shenton, 2004). In this study, discussions with the supervisor and reflections were some of the strategies utilized to ensure credibility.

Transferability is defined as the degree to which the results of the research can be applied in other situations or contexts (Shenton, 2004). Given that the research study was mainly a thematic review, transferability was not a priority for this particular study as different researchers can choose different themes as observed by this particular study.

Dependability refers to the ability that another researcher working in the same paradigm would be able to arrive at the same finding (Shenton, 2004). Dependability is very important to trustworthiness as it signifies that the study's findings are consistent and repeatable. This then implies that if trustworthiness is ensured, it is likely that the dependability of this research is also ensured. Lastly, to ensure

Confirmability, the researcher and the perspective of a second person, which in this case is the research supervisor, were used to increase the chances of an unbiased reading of the data (Shenton, 2004).

3.7 Ethical considerations

The ethical process was adhered to, which ensured permission to conduct the study. Ethical Clearance (project number MAK051SFAT01) was provided by the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC). As this was a desktop study, no permission or consent forms were needed as there were no real participants. This study also used freely available publications, articles and journals therefore the relevant articles used for the review were stored on the Mendeley software. Since the data is already in the public domain, there is no need to dispose of it. The findings of

this research will be made public by writing the mini-dissertation and making it available on the library repository.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter sketched the research methodology applied within the present investigation. The research design was explored, including applicable information relating to the structured, systematic process of literature reviewing as applied in this study. The current chapter also highlighted specific methodological requirements, the problem formulation, how the data was collected, aspects relating to evaluating the data, and the methods for analysing and interpreting the data. The technical section of this chapter concluded with a description of how the data is presented. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations. The review includes the literature which met the inclusion criteria of the study.

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Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

4.1 Introduction

The research method used by the researcher was described in detail in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the results of the collected data are presented followed by a discussion and interpretation of the results in Chapter 5. From the systematic review of nine (9) articles, three themes and 5 sub-themes emerged from objective 1 and one (1) theme emerged from objective 2. The majority of the reviewed articles for this study reveal that there is significantly insufficient information present that employs the understanding of Erikson from an African perspective. Also there was a significant number of articles that presented the impact of absent fathers on the identity formation of adolescents that were excluded in this study due to the exclusion of Erikson's idea of identity. This reveals that there is a huge gap in African, particularly in South African literature, when it comes to the identity formation process of adolescents and the role that an absent parent can have in this process.
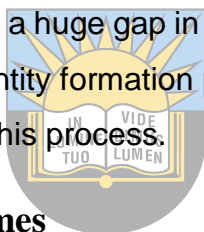
4.2 Discussion of emergent themes

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data extracted from the nine (9) eligible articles used in this systematic review. This method was chosen for analysis because of its ability to highlight the themes in the data consulted. The reviewed articles had common themes (see Appendix 1) that form the foundation of the emergent themes presented in this chapter of the study.

The current study for objective 1 has revealed 2 themes and their 5 sub-themes about the impact of father absence on adolescent identity formation. However, because of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, there appears to be insufficient research available on recent articles for this study.

For this study, themes discovered from published literature and interpretation are based on the main objectives of this study, which are indicated in Chapter 1. The

results are presented in such a way that determination is made on whether the objectives of the study were met or not.

4.2.1 Emergent Themes

The examination of articles selected for inclusion in this systematic review shed light on the various factors focusing on the relationship between adolescents, identity formation and absent fatherhood. Factors included in the articles largely focused on independent and inner motivation of adolescents to achieve a positive identity, regardless of a present father figure. The findings of this chapter are broken down into two sections, with section one discussing the three themes and their sub-themes. Following the theme section, the intervention proposed in this particular study is discussed in 4.1.1.

Outline of the research study findings

Research Objective	Main Theme	Subtheme
Objective 1: To explore how SA researchers employing Erikson's frame work evaluate the impact of father absence on the identity formation of adolescents	**Theme 1:** Impact of absent Father Negative Impact Positive Impact	➢ Resentment and hatred ➢ Socio-economic status of the family ➢ Resilience and motivation ➢ Academic excellence
	Theme 2: Psychological Impact	➢ Who am I?

Objective 2: To determine how SA researchers employing Erikson's framework consider if/how the contribution from other male figures can lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents with absent fathers	Theme 1: Supportive findings for Involvement of extended family	

4.3 Main Theme Discussion

Objective 1: To explore the impact of father absence on the identity formation of adolescents. From this objective, the following themes and subthemes emerged:

4.3.1. Impact of an absent father

Findings from the selected articles of this review showed that raised in father-absent homes perceive the effects of father absence on their psychosocial well-being differently. Some adolescents felt it impacted negatively on how they formed and maintained relationships with others (Padi et al., 2014), how they related to others, and how they perceived themselves (Morrell & Richter, 2006). In contrast, some studies indicated that adolescents had not experienced these problems, but rather, absent fatherhood moulded them to act or behave in a way that shows maturity (Langa, 2014).

4.3.2 Negative Impact

Throughout literature and study, it was clear that absent fatherhood can be experienced in two ways, positive and negative. Father absence has an impact on the

health and well-being of children and may have an impact that reaches much further than adolescence. A father's absence appears to contribute significantly to life's adversity, including maladaptive anger and bitterness, low self-identity and economic family struggles, poor academic achievement, low self-identity and risk behaviour, including early sexual relations and drug use (Langa, 2014).

Langa (2014) agrees with Tau (2020) that, "Some participants also shared their fantasies of how their lives would be different if their absent fathers were present, for example by buying them clothes and guiding them as young boys about the meaning of being a male person. It was clear in the interviews that the boys believed the absent fathers would provide direction or guidance and take away their feelings of sadness, frustration, confusion, resentment and depression if they were present".

Hatred and Resentment

Young adults reportedly become angry at themselves or displace this anger to any male figure, generalizing that all men are the same as their perceived abandoning father (Tau, 2020). It has been found that young adults from absent-father homes are likely to place the blame on themselves or others for their fathers' perceived abandonment (Ramisur, 2007). These young adults are likely to assume that their fathers left them because they are not adorable or good enough. Consequently, they tend to blame their mothers or their significant others for this perceived abandonment by their fathers (Tau, 2020). Some respondents said they hated their fathers because they neglected their children.

"... I had some resentment towards them, so in terms of coping with certain things, I just ignore males in general. I just felt some resentment towards males just because of my father. I don't think highly of them at all. I still don't, but yeah, it didn't bother me that much." (Tau, 2020).

Another respondent was quoted saying:

"I don't wanna say I'm angry or bitter, it's just one of those things that if he needed a kidney, I wouldn't give it to him" (Tau, 2020).

The respondent who said that her father abandoned them said, "I am angry with my father because he left us when we needed him most….I do not think I will be able to forgive him" (Herbert & Gadzike, 2017).

One of the emotional impact issues reported by young adults was anger directed towards fathers who, according to the respondents, had failed them by not being present and involved in their lives. Some respondents vented their anger at other people. Thupayagale et al. (2012), in their study, all five groups expressed stress and depression as noted emotional effects that they experienced from not knowing who their fathers were. However, all the female groups verbalized anger and hate towards their mothers for the absence of fathers in their lives (Thupayagale et al., 2012). From the above study, it is clear that adolescents who had been abandoned by their fathers early in life, largely expressed anger towards their fathers, whether they had met them or not.

The impact of absent fatherhood on the socioeconomic status of the family

A study by Herbert and Gadzike (2017) titled Experiences of Female University Students who grew up in father-absent homes, revealed that the absence of a father had a financial impact on the lives of the girl child left behind. Most respondents in their study expressed that they felt the void left by their fathers due to the financial strain that they experienced (Herbert & Gadzike, 2012).

This is in line with Tau's study, whereby some of her participants felt that the father's absence negatively impacted their financial situation at home. These respondents felt that if the father had been present and able to assist the mother to take care of the household needs, they would not have had to struggle financially, and their financial

situation would have been better, as two salaries would have made a significant difference.

"It's very difficult, cause I always felt a need for… cause we grew up very poor hey, and a father is in a position to provide and I felt he had taken the pressure of my mother lightly… I guess he wasn't interested, or it was not the time or the place or whatever, and it's always good to have both parents. If you want to ask your father for something like there are certain things you wanna ask your father about" (Tau, 2020).

"Yeah, we would be much better off… obviously my father could have provided, then… because of his absence he did not. Yeah, it affected the financial situation at home and I think that's one of the biggest factors. His absence affected me financially. He was absent when I needed cash, love, and attention yah that" (Tau, 2020).

From the expressions noted above, the absence of a father had a financial impact on the lives of the child left behind. Most respondents expressed that they felt the void left by their fathers due to the financial strain that they experienced. In their study, East et al. (2006) found that females who experienced father absence at an early age were exposed to other life adversity factors, including low socio-economic status and familial conflict. This shows that the father is not only there to provide a sense of identity, emotional and psychological support but he is also there to provide financial support and/or all other material possessions to the child and family.

4.3.3 Positive impact
Resilience and motivation

Marsha Harker-van Heerden (2018) conducted a study titled: The effect of parental involvement on identity styles of adolescents. Her study focused on identity development and the role parental involvement played in this process. According to Van-Heerden (2018), some respondents in her study reported absent fatherhood to be a driving force toward independence. "Some respondents in her study felt that they

had learnt to take ownership of their lives at an early age without having to depend on others as a result of being fatherless" (Van-Heerden, 2018).

This view is supported by Tau (2020), her respondents were quoted as saying:

"… I think mom drilled in that I should stand for myself and just be independent, build my career and my everything so she always told me that… even my uncle, my father's brother, he always said… oops I can't remember the phrase that he uses, oh he said anything a guy can give you, you can do it for yourself, like, he says don't depend on another male when you can do it yourself like there's nothing that a man can give that you can't get for yourself" (Tau, 2020).

For some, growing up with an absent father presented them with an opportunity and a desire to be better fathers themselves in the future. In a study by Langa (2014) respondents responded as follows:

"Yes, it is painful growing up, not knowing your father. I want to be a different father" (Langa, 2014).

"I don't want to be like my father who was absent. I'm there for my child. I don't want my child to suffer as I did you see." (Langa, 2014)

"I want to do things for my child so she can have a better life than I did and guide her not to experience the things that I did because I do not want him to do the mistakes I did. I will also talk to him about sex and all that stuff." (Langa, 2014).

Tau (2020) concurred that some respondents reported absent fatherhood to be a "driving force" toward their independence. These respondents felt that they had to learn how to take ownership of their lives at an early age without having to depend on others as a result of being fatherless (Tau, 2020).

"I always loved school, like I grew up in a single-mother home, so, I had to use my education ahead in life, so I could never… like I was a second-born child, so I always

had to be an example to others, I always had to perform at school, and I always had to lead by example, so, I never had that, and I always loved going to school because that's where I met people, my classmates and friends" (Tau, 2020).

Some participants added that they from a young age they were able to make their own decisions without seeking the approval from their mothers (Tau, 2020). In some cases, children who grow up in father-absent homes are likely to succeed in life. This is because they feel they are compelled to establish and prove themselves (Datta, 2007).

Academic excellence

Some adolescents in the literature presented felt that the lack of finances and resources at home motivated them to work hard, they felt that hard work was the only solution for them to become successful. This motivation results from seeing their single mother's inability to provide for her children's needs (Tau, 2020). It emerged that most respondents had grown to be resilient and career motivated in light of the father's absence that they experienced (Tau, 2020).

"Eh I would say during the early stages my father's absence affected me but now I'm okay. I'm excelling at school; so, it's no longer having a bad impact" (Tau, 2020)

"You know, sometimes, people can view it as a bad thing but actually as an academic, I see it not as a bad thing at all, because it matured me, made me an independent man; made me stand up and stand for myself and made me to be who I am today. I mean like I couldn't have known much about life, and been a spoiled brat; so, thanks to the nigga for not being part of my life because now I am a man" (Tau, 2020)

Some of the participants in the study by Langa (2014) added:

"It is not easy growing up without your father, but now I don't care about being popular or what. I only care about my future. My future comes first" (Langa, 2014).

"I care only more about my school work. Yeah, myself I don't care about being violent or showing other boys that I'm strong and I can fight with other boys. I just have to work hard for my future as there is no father to support me" (Langa, 2014).

Thus, growing up in an absent father home does not necessarily disadvantage a child but looking at factors such as emotional and financial support as well as the environment in which the child grows up in. For instance, if a mother's family provides the child with enough support emotionally, physically, and financially, then the chances of children longing for their fathers or feeling their absence are slim (Datta, 2007).

The findings show that young adults raised in father-absent homes perceive the effects of growing up without a father on their psychosocial well-being differently. While some participants expressed it impacted negatively in instances such as how they formed and maintained relationships with others, how they related to others, and how they perceived themselves. Others reported the absence impacted them positively as they did not struggle with self-esteem and trust issues; but rather, growing without a father taught them to be independent and self-reliant.

4.3.4 Psychological Impact of absent fathers on adolescents

Throughout the various studies reviewed, the theme of emotional disturbance was common. This research found that adolescents who grew up in father-absent homes were prone to be anxious and constantly worried due to everyday situations they encountered. According to Holborn and Eddy (2011), children who grew up in father absent homes in some instances experience several instabilities which may result in feelings of sadness, and loneliness.

In a study by Herbert and Gadzikwa (2017), some participants believed that their lives would have been emotionally richer if their fathers were present. Such participants were quoted saying:

"Sometimes when I think about my father I feel empty, I feel as if I lack something as he left us when I was still in primary school" (Herbert & Gadzikwa, 2017).

One of his male participants was quoted saying:

"I believe if my dad was around I wouldn't be so distressed by some life events such as heartbreaks the way it affects me now. I am sure he would be supporting me" (Herbert & Gadzikwa, 2017).

"It was tough to grow up without my father. My mother lacked the comfort of a happy relationship and the support of a breadwinner. As a little boy, I could not do much to comfort her, but I did my best. Moreover, I did not have my biological father as a role model. I could not observe and copy how my father dealt with the challenges of life. In retrospect, I know that it would have been helpful to have him as a male role model to turn to and confide in. I have found my direction in life, but I know that things were easier for my peers who grew up with their fathers" (Herbert & Gadzikwa, 2017).

From the expressions above, a father did not simply mean someone to play with or a provider, but rather, these participants believed that their lives would have been emotionally richer if their fathers were present in their lives. According to Balcom (1998), "men who were abandoned by their fathers often have problems establishing self-worth and developing secure emotional attachments with both partners and children. Without their fathers modelling positive behaviour in relationships, such men often have difficulty developing and sustaining intimate relationships" (Bartholomew, 1990).

Who am I?

Some the participants reported having struggled with identity issues resulting from not knowing their father's spiritual orientation or traditions. They also responded that they needed to identify themselves with their father's surname, ancestors and lineage to better understand who they were. They reported having struggled to identify

themselves (their roots) as they lacked their father's lineage and ancestral background.

A study by Tau (2020) on the perceived impact of absent fatherhood: An exploration of young adults' experiences of father absence concurred with the point. The study considered identity and role confusion as one of the impacts resulting from being brought up in the absence of a father (Tau, 2020). Some of the participants reported having struggled to identify who they are, this could be due to lack of spiritual connectivity/not knowing their roots resulting from not knowing their fathers (Tau, 2020). They also indicated that they needed their fathers to learn more about their spiritual background. Some of the respondents responded as follows:

 "No, maybe I'm in denial, but yah, maybe I had an identity crisis, I have identity issues even now, I just told you one of them. My spiritual orientation is part of my identity and I'm having trouble with balancing or regulating, whether I wanna be traditional or religious or whether I should balance it, that's a big struggle for me" (Tau, 2020)

"The only thing that I can think of is a longing for identity, that people to identify with… like, I mean to see your father and to identify with as your father and to see your brothers to identify similarities you know, Uhm, that's the only thing… the issue of identity, like identifying myself. On that issue of identity, to longing of my father's presence, to identify with him" (Tau, 2020).

Another responded:

"I think having a father was necessary because some of my friends had their dads, so I wanted to have him just like them. I'm sure having my father around would help to know where I come from, my relatives and to know where I belong to" (Herbert & Gadzikwa, 2017).

The theoretical framework supports this theme, as according to Erikson (1963) the "Identity vs. Identity diffusion" stage is a critical time to develop a sense of identity

during human development in adolescents; the conflict according to Erikson is centred on developing a personal identity. Completion of this stage leads to a strong sense of self that will often remain throughout life (Erikson, 1963). Rothrauff et al. (2009) stipulated that for a sense of stability and well-being to take place, the self-worth of an individual has to be developed. Signs of anxiety, insecurity and low self-esteem begin to show in an adolescent when the parent does not show support toward the child. When a parent sets boundaries, this creates a sense of responsibility and self-control within a child (Rothrauff et al., 2009).

Objective 2: To determine if the contribution from other male figures can lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents with absent fathers.

4.3.5 Involvement of extended family

In the absence of the biological father, in the African culture, it is normal for extended family members to be involved in assuming caregiving and father figure responsibilities for children, especially for adolescents. According to the thematic analysis by Molongoana (2015), during the interviewing phase of her research, it emerged that for the majority of her participants, various extended family members were involved in caring for them when their fathers or parents chose or were not able to be a part of their upbringing (Molongoana, 2015).

Mologoana deduced that grandparents were mostly the one involved in taking up the caregiving responsibilities, and the participants of the study, therefore, seemed to have special relationships and bonds with their grandparents, particularly the grandfather (Molongoana, 2015). One participant reported that she had formed a close bond with her grandfather through their play when she was a child. The participant is quoted saying the following:

"Well, my childhood was more about my grandfather because we were super close. So that was a major thing for me. We used to play hide and seek and I used to hide in the same place, but he would pretend that he does not see me ... so that used to stand out a lot. So we were like super close" (Molongoana, 2015).

Though it may seem unimportant, the participant's narratives of playing hide and seek with her grandfather evoked feelings of happiness which projected her affection for her grandfather. This then brings to our attention that as insignificant as a game of hide and seek may appear, it was one of those memories that stood out for this participant and others, which shows that any interaction between the father and his children will remain a big part of the child's life.

Molongoana (2015) also reported that some female participants in the study were able to identify men, "abo baba omkhulu" and "baba omncane" in their lives who fulfilled roles as social rather than biological fathers. For one of the participants in the study, it was her stepfather who assumed this role and she was quoted saying:

"My step-dad, has been in the picture for about thirteen years and he played a great role. I mean with my projects and stuff when my mother could not help me, he was always there. He always gives me advice, even though it is irritating at times you wanna be like oh shut up (laughs), ja, he gives me advice. Especially when it comes to guys, he is worried you know, like a dad would be, so it's not like I have had no father in my life" (Molongoana, 2015).

For a few of the other participants, the father figure was a male relative or someone from their communities and they were quoted saying:

"My friends' fathers, they always like, they sort of took me in. So, like throughout my life, I've had like six adopted fathers (laughs) and all my friends' fathers would be like, okay we've adopted you now, today you're my child. Especially my best friend ... her

father has always been the main father figure. So, it was like, many fathers" (Molongoana, 2015).

"I have always had a male figure around. It was never my biological father or anything neither was it a stepdad or anything in that way ... my mother's youngest brother, used to stay with us ... he is married and has kids, but he was always like a dad. He would always ... like if you needed guidance or you needed someone to speak to or maybe (laughs) discipline in a way, he was always there ... ja, he took me as his first child, so I have had a male figure in my life. And I think that, about gender roles, men should like, be like him" (Molongoana, 2015).

Langa (2014) indicated that men do not need to be biological fathers to accept the fatherhood role. This was demonstrated by the participants above that in the absence of biological fathers, other men such as maternal uncles, grandfathers, neighbours, teachers and religious leaders often serve to fill the roles of a father (Langa, 2014) This theme does meet the set-out objective. In Molongoana's (2015) study, the majority of participants agreed that the presence of a father figure uncle, step-father, grandfather, or role model has had a positive impact on their lives and contributed positively to whom they grow up to be. Mkhize (2004) stipulated that the majority of adolescents growing up in non-nucleic families but have a father figure had better chances of establishing healthy identity formation than adolescents without family. This theme meets the set objective and is supported by the literature.

Adolescents develop an identity based on what is modelled on by an important figure or a particular role model whom they feel provides them with the most promising road to achieving their individual goals. Various members of both maternal and paternal relative's members play important roles in guiding children into adulthood. They also assume partial responsibility for the welfare of children. In rural areas, the uncle from the maternal side is often regarded as a father figure while grandparents are often seen as a pillar and also appreciated for their wisdom and moral guidance (Niehaus,

1994). This highlights the importance of the involvement of extended family in the development of the adolescent. In addition to developing individual identities, it has been noted that "young people in societies also develop a strong sense of group identity because of a strong relationship to the group" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is the case for a young person in rural South Africa who relies on extended relatives and community members as role models to guide them in the process of individual identity development (Nsamenang, 2010).

Morrell and Richter (2006) in the literature review states that, "from an African context, raising a child is generally perceived as the collective responsibility of the extended family as a whole". This is evident by how elder members of the family are also referred to as mothers and fathers. For example, in isiZulu terms such as "ubaba omkhulu" (bigger/elder father) or "ubaba omncane" (smaller/younger father) are used to refer to any older man/male relative who has taken the role of caring for, protecting and providing for children (Hunter, 2005).
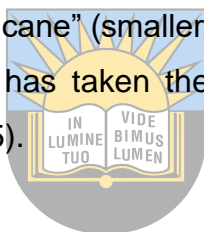
4.4 Discussion
(According to Erikson's/Marcia) stage of identity formation

The goal of this study was to explore the impact of absent fatherhood on the identity formation of adolescents. The fifth stage of Erikson's, Identity vs. Role confusion was very crucial in this study, as it is a stage of transition from childhood to adulthood (Erikson, 1968). The identity stage is when individuals transition and outgrow their childhood life, establish a new identity as young adults and experience a whole new set of challenges in their new stages (Kroger, 2004).

"Identity achievement is a societal effort, and not an individual activity to be performed in isolation" (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). Marcia (1980) states that identity formation is a process that happens over time, not at once. "The process is likely to begin during the adolescence period, known to be a period of crisis, during which

physical development, cognitive skills and social expectations are in progress, to reach identity formation". The identity process does not escalate or terminate in adolescence, but rather in old age (Marcia, 1980).

"Establishing self-consistency and a stable identity is important for a positive outcome of identity; therefore, identity development is both psychological and social" (Erikson, 1968). That is, the effect of fathers on their children potentially offers healthy psychological development, self-concept and development of personal values through childhood, adolescence and adulthood and may be a protective factor against the development of maladaptive behaviours and negative self-concept (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). The reviewed literature suggests that when the father is absent in the home, adolescents tend to display lower mental, emotional and behavioural wellbeing. Contrary to this view, Langa (2014) conducted interviews with adolescent boys to explore meanings made out of their lived experiences of growing up without fathers in their personal lives. He found that although the father's absence plays a significant role in the life of adolescents as pointed out by Erikson, it does not necessarily mean it has a negative impact.

Tau (2020) concurred that for some respondents, absent fatherhood became a driving force toward their independence. The majority of the respondents had to learn to take ownership of their lives at an early age, to not depend on others as a result of being fatherless (Tau, 2020). Some emphasized the ability to make their own decisions without seeking approval as their fathers are not present. As a result of this independence, some felt a sense of self-reliance as they reflect and introspection on their lives and make sound decisions on what they want in life (Tau, 2020). Erikson believed that as individuals, we are aware of what motivates us throughout life and that the ego has more significant importance in leading our behaviour than the id does. We make conscious choices in life that focus on meeting major social and cultural needs instead of the more biological ones (Erikson, 1960). Paris et al. (2019) stipulate

that people are motivated by the desire to feel that the world is a trustworthy place, that we are capable individuals who can make a contribution to society and have meaningful lives (2019).

A father brings a sense of belonging to a child, which also helps the adolescent in their search for an identity. This view is supported by Richter and Makusha (2015) who stated that fathers provide a child with a family name, which is the root of their identity. For the majority of young people, defining aspects of their identity come from participation in rich family traditions, religious and cultural affiliations, and may be particularly shaped by family experiences (Mkhize, 2006). Marcia (1980) viewed the identity phenomenon as a result of choices made by adolescents as to which groups or labels they decide to take upon themselves. He felt that people's identities give their lives meaning by defining their role within society (Marcia, 1980).

It is evident from the findings of the present study that absent fatherhood impacts the well-being of adolescents both negatively and positively. It, therefore, becomes noticeable that some adolescents can survive and thrive amid absent fatherhood, despite the challenges they face. In addition, some adolescents can lead successful lives, as they reported having had other support systems. The above-stated authors concur with the psychosocial approach to identity by Erikson. Erikson (1968) emphasized the importance of people in the immediate surroundings of adolescents, supporting and assisting in the process of establishing an identity (Erikson, 1968).

4.5 Intervention

The previous section focused on discussing the emergent themes to answer the proposed research question of this review, by utilizing the **theory of development**. This section focuses on suggested interventions in the systematic review, as an alternative but not the sole alternative to be explored in addressing the absent father

phenomenon. This section also aims to address one of this review's goals to provide positive male role models in the life of these adolescents in the identity formation period of their lives.

According to Richter et al. (2012), "raising a child in a father-absent home requires many adjustments on the part of the family". The absence of a father brings about changes in the family structure, such as the family roles, the family relations and the family's financial circumstances.

A question is then raised on whether single parents are capable of raising their children without support (Richter et al., 2012). This is based on the traditional belief that a child needs both the father and mother to achieve full mental and emotional development (Richter et al., 2012). It may be burdensome or often challenging to ensure that the needs of children are met in and outside the home for some mothers/grandparents (Ratele et al., 2012). Unlike in the olden days, more particularly in African culture, raising and disciplining a child was a collaborative effort between parents and the community, hence the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" (Makusha, 2013). Thus, in other circumstances absent fatherhood appears not to disadvantage a child, but it could be the environment itself in which the child is brought up that affects the child. In some instances, a single mother supports a child adequately emotionally, physically and financially, and there is external support from other role models, then chances of the adolescent desiring their fathers are slim (Datta, 2007).

According to Chikovore et al. (2013), in African communities, "fatherhood was a collective responsibility that was not limited to one's biological child, but branching to other children in the community". In the African context, individuals had the spirit of "Ubuntu" or communalism and were committed to the common good of their community. This included helping one another, including taking up the father role for children from absent-fathered homes (Chikovore et al., 2013). According to Morrell (2006), "fatherhood in the African context did not constitute the presence of a biological

father, but rather, a male substitute who assumed the role of the father for children" (Morrell, 2006). Many South African communities are facing the challenge posed by the absent father phenomenon (Magangi, 2018).

Articles and existing literature have multiple suggestions of how this challenge of absent fatherhood can be resolved. This literature review suggests that in an attempt to resolve this challenge, this may be done by restoring the traditional definition of fatherhood, whereas a father plays an important role of providing, nurturing and protecting their biological children, as well as those in the community raised in single headed homes (Chikovore et al., 2013).

According to Mavungu (2013), a significant number of children in Africa are not exposed to a good father-and-child relationship. Absent fatherhood can be experienced both negatively and positively, and often it is perceived as not affecting all those who are surrounded by extended family members. These members fill this void by fulfilling some of the fatherly duties designated to father figures (Chikovore et al., 2013). It would be an unfair task to impose on anyone to fulfil the role of a father due to them being males, based on the picture painted by the respondents in the articles and existing literature. It would appear that in some instances, it depends on the emotional relationship between the adolescent and the family or community member who takes on the father figure role.

Whether or not the father role in the child's life is beneficial remains to be explored. However, in agreement with some of the existing literature, a present father have positive aspects. In addition, it would appear that the presence of a father figure played by an uncle, grandfather, or community figure serves as a crucial guide for the adolescent, supporting the African proverb/expression that "it takes a village to raise a child".

4.6 Chapter Summary

The themes and interpretations of the results of the study were presented in this chapter. These results were analysed and interpreted in line with the study, aims, objectives and literature review. The above-presented findings revealed that father absence gives birth to several psycho-social challenges for adolescents who grow up in absent-father homes. These problems include financial challenges; psychological issues, including identity confusion, hatred and resentment. These problems seem to have significant effects on adolescents' well-being, meaning major aspects of human development seem to be affected by these challenges. This study also observed that adolescents from father-absent homes grow to develop resilience and become focused in their lives. The absence of a father made some realize that they should stand up for themselves to survive in life.

The main findings were summarized in this chapter. The following chapter provides the conclusions, recommendations and solutions emanating from the analysed data.
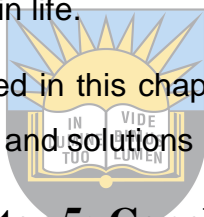
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter concludes the findings of the study. It also makes recommendations for policy implications and future research from the analysed data or results presented and interpreted in the previous chapter. Several findings were discussed in the current study focusing on the research question, aims and objectives of the study and linked to previous study findings provided in literature.

The current exploration found that in families and their children's lives, fathers have a significant and major role. This is especially true in the area of financial support, emotional support, and lack of developing healthy romantic relationships. It was observed that a father's absence may be damaging to the adolescent's sense of who

they are, and often disregards the roles of extended family members in children's lives (Mkhize, 2006).

5.2 Summary of most significant findings

This study's findings highlighted some of the effects raised in an absent-father home, often resulting in either negative or positive effects on the adolescent being raised in a single-mother home. When we look at the negative side, children experiences multiple challenges in terms of their psychosocial well-being, where their sense of worth is affected. Most studies reported that participants experienced difficulties in their upbringing due to lack of emotional and financial support, which they felt should have been provided by their fathers. Some expressed anger and resentment towards their absent fathers and how that has affected how they respond to others in general. It was also observed that absent fatherhood has an impact on the family system. Most research participants believed that the financial situation at home is impacted negatively by the loss of a second income from the absent father.

The findings of this study also revealed that the father's absence can positively affect the adolescent, as the adolescent is compelled to accept responsibility from a young age and gain motivation to achieve in life. These adolescents rather decide to focus on academic excellence, being better and present fathers themselves (Langa, 2014). Valuing and appreciating the efforts of the available and involved parent seems to motivate some of these adolescents to dream big and causes them to focus on what is possible rather than being demotivated by the absence of the other parent.

This study also observed that some adolescents can manage their fathers' absence well, by drawing from extended family members like; uncles, grandfathers, or other positive community members, for example, pastors, aunts, youth leaders, health care workers who fulfilled the absent father's role (East et al., 2006). The presented findings correlate with previous studies that emphasized that not all children raised in single parent homes are bound to a life of failure.

The theme that strongly emerged was that of a need for substitute or replacement male role models. The review of the literature highlighted that it is something that we need to pay close attention to and increase efforts to provide substitute father figures or role models for adolescents throughout the developmental stages of adolescents. This finding was congruent with one of the questions of this study which asked, "Does providing appropriate male role models to adolescents with absent fathers lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents?" These themes met the objectives set out for this study and highlighted the need for more research to be done in the field of identity formation and the impact of father absence.

It is therefore evident from the findings presented by this study that absent fatherhood impacts the wellbeing of adolescents in various ways and their psychosocial wellbeing. In summary, absent fatherhood impacted the respondents in many areas of their lives. These shaped their lives both negatively and positively.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

A number of limitations could be highlighted with regards to this study:

- One limitation of this study was using only published literature, thus some relevant articles, books and journals could have been missed which could have provided significant data to be used in this study.

- Only Studies that explained identity from an Ericksonian paradigm were used in this study which resulted in the exclusion of studies that would have better explained the two phenomena under investigation properly.

- Using only University of Fort Hare electronic databases and accessible public databases to search for relevant studies. This means that this study may have missed other relevant studies available in other public databases that the University of Fort Hare does not have access to, or private databases.

- Another limitation is that this study was restricted only to studies from the years 2010 to 2020.

- Not including other identity theories in the understanding of identity formation limited the results received.

- A further limitation is that the search of data was restricted to studies focusing on the impact of absent fathers on identity formation of adolescence, resulting in the search for data to be limited.

5.4 RECOMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study makes a recommendation to the above-mentioned phenomena discussed below:

- More studies about adolescent identity formation and the impact of family are necessary as there is limited published literature.
- More studies about Erikson's developmental stages from an African perspective.
- More inclusion on other identity theory studies need to be published in South African.

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A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIXE 1: Data Extraction Sheet

To explore the impact of father absence on the identity formation of adolescents. To determine whether the contribution from other male figures can lead to healthy identity formation in adolescents with absent fathers.

Data Extraction		
Identifying features of Journal articles		
Author (s)	**Title**	**Source/ year**
Leah East, L., Jackson, D., O'BRIEN, L.	Father absence and adolescent development: a review of the literature	2006
Specific characteristics of the journal article		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
This study employed qualitative study with content analysis.		To review the extant of literature on father absence, particularly as it relates to adolescent well-being and development.
Description of finding		
Findings	**Conclusion**	**Recommendations**

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Nurses are challenged to respond to the complex needs of the children and families with whom we come into contact. The literature suggests unmet needs for children and adolescents experiencing father absence. Nurses have the potential to be effective in supporting father-absent children and assisting families experiencing parental relationship breakdown, in order to maintain as stable as possible an environment for the children and young people in	The conclusions drawn from this literature review suggest father absence has an impact on the health and well-being of children and may have an impact that reaches much further than adolescence. Father absence appears to contribute significantly to life adversity factors, including maladaptive behaviour, poor academic achievement, low self-identity and risk behaviour, including early sexual relations and drug use.	There is a need to develop strategies to support father absent children in such a way as to reduce or avoid the deleterious outcomes reported in the literature. There is also a need to explore effective ways for children to continue to have meaningful relationships with their fathers subsequent to parental relationship breakdown.

Author (s)	Title	Source/ year
Gloria Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, Tennyson Mgutshini and Zethu Zerish Nkosi	Where is my Daddy? An Exploration of the Impact of Absentee Fathers on the Lives of Young People in Botswana	2012
Specific characteristics of the journal article		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
This study employed a qualitative design, with Focus group discussions.	45 final year students at the University of Botswana,	This paper argues that coparenting can have both direct and indirect or mediated effects on children. Coparenting has an added benefit of modelling dyadic skills that include proving mutual emotional support,

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>influence, and amicable resolution of disputes.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Description of finding</td></tr>
<tr><td>Findings</td><td>Conclusion</td><td>Recommendations</td></tr>
<tr><td>African personhood is a larger than self-conception, which also includes more than the physical being and shows that young people raised in father absent families view their personhood as inferior, less guarded, and incomplete, relative to that of their counterparts who were born</td><td>It is evident from the stories of young people in Botswana that there is a need for father involvement in their lives or the children's lives in general. For any meaningful involvement of fathers in the children's lives there must be policies put in place that will encourage men's involvement</td><td>The recommend that policies should include a policy that recognizes a child's paternity by including the name of the father in the birth certificate even if unmarried. Paternity leave is another policy that the researchers recommend for Botswana.</td></tr>
<tr><td>and raised in married-couple families. Living a full quality life eludes youth who were raised by mothers only, affirming the importance of fathers in the personhood of any individual.</td><td>in the children's lives. Doing so will give the children an identity and issues such as marrying your brother or sister and feeling of insecurity will be minimized.</td><td>a policy that encourages non-resident fathers to be involved in their children's lives is long overdue</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Author (s)</td><td>Title</td><td>Source/ year</td></tr>
<tr><td>Kgothatso Rachel Molongoana</td><td>Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grew up without a father</td><td>2015</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Specific characteristics of the journal article</td></tr>
<tr><td>Methodology</td><td>Population</td><td>Purpose/ Main focus</td></tr>
</table>

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

This study employed Thematic analysis, with Semi structured open-ended interviews.	Seven (7) young women from the University of Witwatersrand.	Was to explore the experiences of young women who grew up without their fathers.
Description of finding		
Findings	**Conclusion**	**Recommendations**
The research found that fathers are absent due to a multitude of reasons. The research findings furthermore showed that many of the participants' conceptions of the role of mothers and fathers were consistent with traditional views of fathers as providers, disciplinarians and protectors, whereas mothers were perceived as nurturers. Despite the absence of fathers, the participants' mothers as well as extended family were able to provide positive, stable and happy childhood experiences for them. The participants, however, perceived themselves to be disadvantaged with regards to having the capacity to build	Fathers have significant roles in families and within their daughters' lives. This is especially true in the area of financial provision and in the daughters' capacity to develop healthy romantic relationships. The findings of this study suggest that daughters in single mother homes live in poorer households than in homes where there is a dual income. According to the findings of the current study, mothers play a significant role in providing for their children and creating stable and happy homes. To suggest that children require their fathers more than their mothers, is an under appreciation of the mothers and women in the	As a result of the small size of the sample, it is advised that it would be more effective to conduct further research that explores how young women of different races and cultural backgrounds present multiple voices on the topic of father absence in post-apartheid South Africa. It may perhaps also be beneficial to conduct research in which same-race and mixed race groups are utilised. It is believed that this will broaden the understanding on the extent to which race and culture influence young women's experiences of father absence.
healthy romantic relationships. This highlighted the need and importance of social fathers and the need for young women to be supported in this regard.	community who care for children.	

Authors	Title	Source/year

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Malose Langa	Meaning Making in Growing Up Without a Father: Narratives of Young Adolescent Boys	2014
Specific characteristics of the journal articles		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
The study employed a qualitative design and used interviews to collect data.	Thirty-two (32) adolescent boys who were aged between 14 to 18 years in grade 10 to 12	To explore meanings made out of their lived experiences of growing up without fathers in their personal lives. How did the experience of growing up without fathers affect this group of adolescent boys?
Description of Findings		
Findings	**Conclusion**	**Recommendations**
The study showed that some of the adolescent boys were strongly future-orientated and that this was important in the willingness to sacrifice alignment with dominant or popular positions in the present and thus entertaining non-hegemonic or alternative identity positions. Their narratives revealed positive signs of change, ambition and the aspiration to achieve career goals. This group of adolescent boys saw the pursuit of academic work as an investment in the future. Despite growing up without biological fathers, the	Out of thirty participants, nineteen adolescent boys mentioned that they did not know their fathers, six knew their fathers but were not living with them and their fathers had separated from their mothers. Some boys in this study constructed positive male identities, despite the lack of father figures in their lives. A range of internal and external factors can help adolescent boys develop a positive masculine identity. It was also evident that the lack of fathering experiences did not automatically lead to trans-generational transmission	More research on the enteral and external factors that can motivate a boy with an absent father to pursue positive life goals.
To strength the efforts of the boys who are future orientated.

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participants clearly embraced alternative notions of what it meant to be a boy, confirming emerging literature that adolescent boys who grow up without fathers do not necessarily engage in violent or risk-taking behaviours.	of poor or absent fathering. Despite the lack of a positive fathering experience, many of the participants revealed their desires to be 'good' fathers in comparison with their own absent biological fathers.	

Authors	Title	Source/year
Mkhize Nhlanhla	African traditions and the social, economic and moral dimensions of fatherhood. *Baba:* men and fatherhood in South Africa	2006
Specific characteristics of the journal articles		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
This study employed qualitative design.	Absent fathers.	To analyse fatherhood from a socio-cultural position.
Description of Findings		
Findings	**Conclusion**	**Recommendations**

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

This chapter argues that in order to promote fatherhood it may be useful to revisit traditional African understanding that defines fatherhood as a collective social responsibility of the family. This allows for the acknowledgement of the role played by uncles. Aunts and grandparents in raising children. It also offers a fatherhood role to all men, irrespective of whether they are biological fathers or not, on the understanding that children belong to everybody.	This chapter has contrasted essentialist and collectivist (social) approaches to fatherhood, arguing there is room for both. In traditional societies, fatherhood (ububaba) is performed by anyone available to guide and counsel young boys as they grow into manhood.	It is important to ensure that positive images of fatherhood that continue to exist even under harsh social and economic circumstances are portrayed and not only the negative ones.

Authors	Title	Source/year
Tidimalo Padi, Mzikazi Nduna, Grace Khunou & Paseka Kholopane.	Defining absent, unknown and undisclosed fathers in South Africa. South African Review of Sociology	2014
Specific characteristics of the journal articles		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
This study employed qualitative design and used semi-structured interviews to collect data.	73 young people aged between 16 and 36 participated in the study.	An attempt towards contributing to expanded definitions of father absence.
Description of Findings		
Findings	**Conclusion**	**Recommendations**

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

In our finding we stumbled across multiple conceptualizations of father absence as experienced by the young women. The various categories emerging from the data provide the following types of understandings of father absence: absent and unknown; absent but known; absent and undisclosed; and unknown and deceased. From a detailed discussion of these understandings, this article shows that the concept of father absence is embedded in socio-economic and political contexts and therefore it is complex, and thus should be defined with care.	In the study. It was found that an unknown father status was conferred when very little or no details were known about the putative father or when a living (or late) father could not fulfil their fatherhood role, resulting in negative feelings towards the father.	Further research on father absence. Research is needed to test the fit of these categories in bigger and appropriately powered quantitative studies so as to provide a measure of the extent and the varied ways in which father absence is experienced by young people.

| Authors	Title	Source/year
Zirima Herbert & Gadzikwa Princess.	Experiences of female university students who grew up in father absent homes.	2017
Specific characteristics of the journal articles		
Methodology	**Population**	**Purpose/ Main focus**
The study adopted an explorative case study design and used semi-structured interviews to collect data.	A total of fifteen (15) participants aged between 20 and 25 years.	The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female university students at a selected university in Zimbabwe who grew up for a larger part of their childhood without their biological fathers.
Description of Findings		

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Findings	Conclusion	Recommendations
Results indicated that the majority of female students who grew up in father-absent homes turned out to be resilient as they had gone through difficult periods in their lives. The nature of the father absence had varying effects on the female students with those who were abandoned by their fathers expressing anger and sometimes even hatred towards the father. A common feature among all the participants was that they had unstable romantic relationships and some looked up to their boyfriends to fill the void left by their absent fathers.	This study revealed that father absence affects women even in their adult life. Some women who grew up without their fathers expressed feelings of sadness, resentment and sometimes anxiety. And also it revealed that father absence gives birth to a number of psycho-social challenges for women when they grow into adulthood. The problems have financial implications which were widely felt by most respondents; psychosocial implications included self efficacy, self-confidence and emotional stability.	This study recommends that future researchers should explore the psycho-social differences that exist between women who grew up in father absent homes and those that grew up with their fathers. The researcher recommends that professional healthcare workers should assist on mentorship programs that help parents and families on parenting styles and their implications. This will cover children of the divorced or separated.

Appendix 2: Ethical Approval Letter

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICS CLEARANCE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Project Number: MAK051SFAT01

Project title: **A systematic review of literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.**

Qualification: Masters in Psychology (Mini-Dissertation)

Student name: Aneliswa Hope Fata

Registration number: 201501557

Supervisor: Dr M Makupula

Department: Psychology

Co-supervisor: Ms S Vasi

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby grant ethics approval for MAK051SFAT01. This approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Renewal of approval must be applied for BEFORE termination of this approval period. Renewal is subject to receipt of a satisfactory progress report. The approval covers the undertakings contained in the abovementioned project and research instrument(s). The research may commence as from the 21/04/21, using the reference number indicated above.

Note that should any other instruments be required or amendments become necessary, these require separate authorisation. Please note that UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material changes in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research.
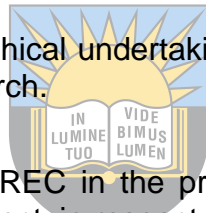
The student must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this approval if o Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected; o Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented; o Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require; o The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.

- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

Your compliance with Department of Health 2015 guidelines and any other applicable regulatory instruments and with UREC ethics requirements as contained in UREC policies and standard operating procedures is implied.

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

UREC wishes you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Renuka Vithal Chairperson**: University Research Ethics Committee**
14 June 2021

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Appendix 3: CASP Checklist

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Paper for appraisal and reference: A Systematic Review on the impact of absent fathers on the identity formation of Adolescents.

Section A: Are the results of the review valid?

1. Did the review address a clearly focused question?

Yes [X]

Can't Tell

No

HINT: An issue can be 'focused' In terms of
• the population studied
• the intervention given
• The outcome considered

Comments: Yes the review had a clear research question and the study set out to explore the question.

2. Did the authors look for the right type of papers?

Yes [X]

Can't Tell

No

HINT: 'The best sort of studies' would
• address the review's question
• have an appropriate study design
(Usually RCTs for papers evaluating interventions)

Comments:
I had the right that studied the absent father phenomenon and its impact on adolescents, majority of the studies used in this study tried their level best to tackle that and offering me better studies and more resources.

Is it worth continuing?

3. Do you think all the important, relevant studies were included?

Yes [X]

Can't Tell

HINT: Look for
• which bibliographic databases were used
• follow up from reference lists
• personal contact with experts
• unpublished as well as published studies

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

|	No		

• Non-English language studies

Comments:
Yes I believe all the studies that were needed for this study were included and I believe they are important and add a lot of information to the body of knowledge available.

4. Did the review's authors do Yes   HINT: The authors need to consider the enough to assess quality of rigour of the studies they have **X** identified? the included studies? Lack of rigour may affect the   studies'
Can't tell results ("All that glisters is not gold"

Merchant of Venice – Act II Scene 7)
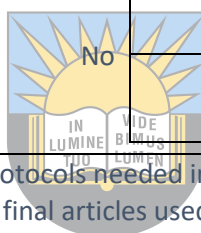
No

Comments: I believe I followed all the protocols needed in order swift back and forth on studies and articles for the benefit of the study> the final articles used for the theme chapter went under great scrutiny so as to have a thorough review

5. If the results of the review Yes HINT: Consider whether have been combined, was it • results were similar from study to study reasonable to do so? • results of all the included studies are

Can't tell clearly displayed **X**

• results of different studies are similar
No
• reasons for any variations in results are discussed

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

Comments: The results from study to study were the same but different so it made it easy because they were agreeing with each other but in different text, this made my themes very easy to combine and the resources around them.

Section B: What are the results?

6. What are the overall results of the review?

HINT: Consider
• If you are clear about the review's 'bottom line' results
• What these are (numerically if appropriate) • how were the results expressed (NNT, odds ratio etc.)

Comments: Absent fatherhood had both negative and positive impact on the lives of adolescents.

7. How precise are the results?   HINT: Look at the confidence intervals, if   given

Comments: I cannot say they are a hundred percent as this was a review of literature, I was not able to have live participants whom were going to be represents a community in that being able to the preciseness of the results.

Section C: Will the results help locally?

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

8. Can the results be applied to patients covered by the review

Yes HINT: Consider whether the local population? • the

Can't Tell could be cause concern

sufficiently different to your population to

• Your local setting is likely to differ much

No from that of the review **X**

Comments: More studies would need to be done before applying this review in real population.

9. Were all important outcomes other information you would

yes HINT: Consider whether considered? • there is

Like to have seen

Can't Tell **X**

No

Comments: Yes but then again you cannot be a hundred percent certain. Though I would have loved more information on identity formation from an African perspective.

10. Are the benefits worth the addressed by the

Yes HINT: Consider harms and costs? • even if this is not

Review, what do you think?

Can't Tell **X**

No

Comments: This study was worth exploring and some of the themes could be used to do more research on the absent father phenomena.

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

APPENDIX 4: Edit Certificate

23 Elfin Glen Road, Nahoon Valley, East London, 5200, masharose0@gmail.com, 0827708892

Professional EDITORS Group

To whom it may concern:

This certifies that the research document whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling and overall style by Rose Masha, a member of the Professional Editors' Group whose qualifications are listed in the footer of this certificate.

Title:

A systematic review of published literature examining the impact of father absence on adolescent identity formation

Author:

Hope Aneliswa Fata

Date Edited:

30 October 2022

Signed

Dr. Rose Masha

B. Library & Inf. Sc.; HDE; Hons. ELT; M. Phil. Hyll.; PhD Ed.

A systematic review on published literature examining the impact of father absence in adolescent identity formation.

List of Tables

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