

**RESEARCH PAPER****Association of Father's Involvement and Absence with Adolescent's Disruptive Behavior****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Saifullah Qureshi\* <sup>2</sup>Maria Rafique and <sup>3</sup>Aneeqa Tariq Abbasi**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences SZABIST University Islamabad, , Pakistan
2. Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences SZABIST University Islamabad, , Pakistan
3. MS (CPY) Scholar, Department of Social Sciences(Psychology), SZABIST University Islamabad, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author:** dr.saifullah@szabist-isb.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to scientifically examine the link between father's involvement or absence and disruptive behavior in adolescents. The role of fathers is crucial in shaping an adolescent's personality. Fathers are not only providers but also play a protective role, helping shield their children from psychological and cultural challenges. A total (N=500) sample of ages 12-19 years (M=16.9540, SD=1.8694) from Buner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan was recruited. Result indicates positive correlation of father's absence with extremism and violence (R= .606) and negative correlation of father's involvement with extremism and violence (R= -.603). The 't' statistics also verified the results and proved that father's not living adolescents have high risk level for extremism and violence as compared to father's involved adolescents (N=500, t (498) = -3.328, p < .000\*\*\*). Findings from this study will contribute to provide an in-depth knowledge in the family research area and will support government authorities in making policies for controlling crimes.

**KEYWORDS** Adolescents, Aggression, Extremism and Violence, Fatherhood, Mental Health, Paternal Deprivation**Introduction**

Over time, the concept of fatherhood has evolved from being a hard-headed spiritual leader to a modern, playful, nurturing, and day-to-day caregiver (Gracewald, 1993; LaRosa, 1997). The traditional role of the father as the sole breadwinner has changed due to the industrial revolution (Pleck & Pleck, 1997). Fathers now serve as connectors to the social world for their children, helping to develop the family's social status and acting as role models for future success and achievement. They fulfill their roles in various ways, with bread-winning remaining a central aspect that shapes their sons' sense of self and masculinity (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 2001; Griswold, 1993). When fathers work abroad or are deployed away from their families, the family must adjust to their absence, which often results in increased maternal influence. This has led researchers and family scientists to study the impact of a father's absence on children, particularly regarding their role as a gender role model (Griswold, 1993). However, limited attention has been paid to the positive effects of father involvement, which is closely linked to positive child development (Cabrera et al., 2000). Children with engaged fathers exhibit fewer behavioral and psychological problems compared to those with absent fathers (Formoso et al., 2007). Research by King and Sobolewski (2006) found that parental involvement leads to lower instances of disruptive behavior, antisocial behavior, depression, sadness, and lying. Similarly, a study by Flori and Buchanan (2003) revealed that children whose fathers spend more time with them have better relationships with their fathers and are less likely to experience psychological problems at ages 7 and 16. These children are also better protected from psychological issues in old age compared to those with absent or neglectful fathers (Flori & Buchanan, 2003).

## **Literature Review**

The term "father absence" lacks a clear definition in scholarly literature. Without a precise and universally accepted description, "father absence" can encompass various situations, including fathers who are unavailable due to death, divorce, familial conflicts, job commitments, custody arrangements, or institutionalization. It can also refer to fathers who are physically present but emotionally distant or neglectful (East, Jackson, & O'Brien, 2006). Typically, "father absence" is characterized by fathers having no physical connection with their children and providing no financial support for a continuous period of 12 months (Black, 2008). Father absence and parental conflicts can potentially expose children to maladaptive emotional or impulsive behaviors (Markowitz & Ryan, 2016). Father's absence can contribute to economic hardship, negatively impact child well-being, increase the likelihood of juvenile detention and criminal tendencies, raise adolescent pregnancy rates, contribute to child abuse and substance addiction, and lead to high school dropout rates (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2011). Fathers play a pivotal role in fostering healthy child development. When children grow up with both parents, they tend to feel secure, loved, and well-protected. This sense of security is crucial for maintaining children's emotional stability (Ribeiro, 2007). Long-lasting adverse psychological consequences stemming from a father's absence can persist into adulthood (McLanahan, Tach & Schneider, 2013).

Igarashi et al. (2009) found a positive correlation between parental neglect and punishment and self-dispersal. Studies on identity diffusion and extremism indicate that paternal monitoring and care serve as protective factors against problematic development in children and adolescents (Hoeve et al., 2009). Nurturing and supportive parenting also have a safeguarding effect against extremism (Lösel et al., 2018). Significant life events, such as parental divorce or the loss of a parent, can trigger an identity crisis characterized by a quest for new orientations and goals (Baier, 2018). Research on extremism highlights family crises as substantial catalysts for extremist behavior. The Transformative Learning Theory supports the notion that family crises and neglect serve as foundational elements in radicalization (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010). Sikkens et al. (2017) explored the impact of adverse family experiences, such as parental divorce, father's absence, parental death, or prolonged illness, resulting in decreased parental attention and control over their children's activities, making it challenging for parents to respond adequately to significant life changes experienced by their children (Sikkens et al., 2017). Najam & Kauser (2012) revealed a robust connection between paternal rejection and emotional instability in adolescents, leading to symptoms of depression. Conversely, there was a positive correlation between paternal involvement and reduced hostility, fewer depression symptoms, higher self-esteem, and a positive emotional state in adolescents. Children with actively involved fathers exhibited a more optimistic worldview compared to adolescents whose fathers were not actively engaged in their lives (Najam & Kauser, 2012). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) "Bright Futures" guidelines for pediatric preventive services identify adolescence as ages 11-21 years (AAP, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) "Adolescent and Young Adult Health Program," adolescence is defined as ages 10-19 (USDHHS, 2015). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System uses a high school sample (grades 9-12) rather than age (CDC, 2015). The U.S. Census Bureau uses different constructs for the adolescent population depending on the specific topic, including ages 12-17 and 15-19 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

## **Theoretical Perspectives**

Theoretical perspectives have concentrated on the father's role in shaping children's enduring personalities, and their influence can be observed during adolescence. The following theories form a robust foundation for the present research study.

### **Attachment Theory**

Bowlby's (1979) attachment theory has examined the repercussions of a father's absence on children, focusing on the impact of paternal separation and its profound consequences on a child's life. The theory investigates the paternal role in children's development, exploring how a father's neglect or absence can affect their offspring (Bowlby, 1979). Moulton and Stolberg (2002) revealed that a lack of contact with fathers can lead to insecure attachments in intimate relationships later in life (Moulton & Stolberg, 2002). Recent research on paternal attachment also suggests that a father's warmth, supportiveness, and emotionally attuned interactions during shared play can reflect the quality of the father-child bond (Grossmann et al., 2008).

### **Social Capital Theory**

Social Capital Theory by Coleman (1988) explored two essential parental contributions, which he referred to as "capital" that promote optimal development. These assets are known as Economic Capital and Social Capital. In accordance with the social capital theory, fathers are expected to actively contribute to their children's social adaptation by providing them with both of these capitals (Coleman, 1988).

### **Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977) constitutes the third primary theoretical foundation for this research study. According to this theory, children imitate the behaviors of the adults they frequently observe. Within this framework, children learn behavioral patterns through observation, modeling, and replication of the behaviors exhibited by their attachment figures. Children form their internal perceptions of personality based on their attachments to their parents. These self-constructed models include the child's sense of self, their relationships, and their understanding of others, serving as cognitive-affective filters that influence how they interact with others and navigate the social sphere (Laible et al., 2004).

Drawing upon prior literature and the first author's professional experience at the Sabaoon deradicalization center in Malakand Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through close interaction with adolescents involved in terrorism, it became evident that the absence and neglect of fathers play a pivotal role in the development of extremism and violence in adolescents. This realization prompted a scientific investigation into the impact of a father's presence and absence on extremism and violence among adolescents, providing the foundation for the present research conducted in the Buner region.

This research endeavor aims to bridge the existing gaps within the realm of prior literature. Previous scholars have not extensively explored the multifaceted role of fathers in conjunction with these particular variables. The primary objective of this research is to elucidate the paternal influence on the emergence of disruptive behavior among adolescents while also assessing the ramifications of paternal involvement on the psychological well-being of these adolescents. This investigation is composed to pique the interest of scholars, fostering a deeper exploration of various facets of young individuals' lives that are significantly impacted by the absence of paternal figures. Furthermore, this study holds the potential to serve as an informational resource for fathers, enhancing their awareness of their pivotal roles and the repercussions of their presence or absence within the lives of their offspring. This research will capture the attention of governmental authorities, potentially prompting the formulation of strategies aimed at mitigating paternal absenteeism resulting from job-related migrations and reducing divorce rates within the country.

### **Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that,

- 1- Adolescents not living with fathers have high level of extremism and violence.
- 2- Father's involved adolescents have low level of extremism and violence.

## Material and Method

### Research Design

Research design serves as an appropriate approach for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting research data. The present study employed a survey research design, following a quantitative research protocol. Valid and reliable questionnaires were utilized for data collection.

### Sample

500 individuals were selected as participants for the research study in Buner region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, employing a purposive sampling approach. The sample (N=500) was drawn from two categories of adolescents as, those whose fathers were alive and those whose fathers were not available either died, divorced or overseas. The study included research participants aged 13 to 19 years who were enrolled as undergraduate students in local government educational institutions. Participants encompassed both genders, with 250 males and 250 females randomly selected for the study (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
**Details of the research participants (N=500)**

	M	F	Father Inv	Father Absent		
				Died	Div	Ab
Frequency	250	250	250	100	50	100
%	50	50	50	40	20	40
Valid %	50	50	50	40	20	40
Cumulative %	50	100	50	40	100	80

Note: M= Male, F=Female, Father Inv= Father Involved, Div= Divorced fathers, Ab= Abroad Jobs fathers

### Inclusion Criteria

Research participants (N=500) were recruited from government academic institutes. Age limit was 13 to 19 years. Those students whose father were living with their families (n=250) and whose fathers were died, divorced or went abroad (n=250) were included in the research study. Minimum period of father's separation was 2 years.

### Exclusion Criteria

Those students whose father's separation period was less than two years were excluded from the study. Students of private colleges/universities were excluded from the study.

### Operational Definitions

#### Independent Variable

The independent variables for this research were father's involvement and father's absence, which has operationally been defined as, father's living with adolescents, and father's not living with adolescents.

### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable for this research work was disruptive behavior of adolescent which has been measured in term extremism and violence through valid and reliable questionnaire.

### **Instruments**

The following instruments were used for collecting data during the research study as:

### **Demographic Sheet**

The demographic sheet was consisted of information about the research participants such as age, gender, family system, mother status, father status and birth order.

### **Extremism and Violence Risk Identification Scale (EVRIS-2020)**

The scale for assessing extremism and violent inclinations among young individuals within the Pakistani context was developed by Hassan, Khattak, Qureshi, and Iqbal, (2020). The scale development was comprised of a three-phase process, each building upon the previous one. Phase I involved item generation, Phase II encompassed validity analysis, and Phase III consisted of a study conducted on a sample of 240 students hailing from academic institutions in the KPK region. Following the analysis, a set of 26 items were finalized, covering four significant domains: uncertainty in life, deficiency of social support, tendencies toward violent aggression, and religious prejudice. Discriminant validity was indicated by the negative correlation between EVRIS and self-esteem. Conversely, the positive association between EVRIS and depression served as evidence of its convergent validation (Hassan et al., 2020).

### **Shah and Qureshi Father's Involvement Inventory (2022)**

In 2022, Muhammad Saifullah Qureshi, Asghar Ali Shah, and Muhammad Ibrarullah Qureshi developed a scale to assess paternal involvement in adolescents within the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan. This comprehensive scale, comprising 10 subdomains, aimed to measure the extent of paternal involvement in this specific demographic. The development process unfolded across three distinct phases. In the initial phase, 70 items were generated through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These items were then reviewed by experts, resulting in a reduction to 49 items. Phase II focused on assessing validity, while Phase III involved rigorous statistical analysis using data from a sample of 490 undergraduate students from the Buner district. The statistical assessment included determining the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value (KMO = .77) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $\chi^2 = 12221.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ), both yielding significant results, indicating the suitability of the items for factor analysis. Principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was employed, considering factor independence and their contribution to measuring paternal involvement. Additionally, the subscales within the Shah & Qureshi Father's Involvement Inventory demonstrated positive correlations with the Brief Coping Scale, providing evidence of the convergent validity of the new inventory. For discriminant validity, all subscales of the Shah & Qureshi Father's Involvement Inventory were analyzed alongside the Buss-Perry Aggression Scale, revealing negative correlations and thus affirming the scale's capacity to discriminate between distinct constructs (M.S. Qureshi, Asghar A.S., & M.I. Qureshi; 2022).

## **Father's Absence Interview Guidelines**

Following the previous researches, father's absence interview guidelines were designed in Urdu language for the statistical analysis of the data. The guidelines questionnaire was consisted of 12 questions. A 5-point Likert Scale was used for measuring father's absence. high score on the guidelines shows high level of father's absence while low score on the guidelines shows low father's absence.

## **Data Analysis**

After completion of data collection process through survey questionnaires all data was entered in SPSS version 24 and was analyzed through proper procedure. Statistical methods were used for the analysis of data collected were, Alpha reliability, Pearson correlation coefficient of variables, independent sample 't' test and linear regression analysis was run through SPSS version 24.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the study, all ethical considerations were meticulously observed. Prior to administering the questionnaires, a strong rapport was established with the participants, including a friendly introduction, discussion about their fathers, and conversations regarding their academic routines and class attendance. Participants were assured that their privacy would remain fully protected. Data collection was conducted with utmost respect for the participants' academic schedules, ensuring minimal disruption. The data gathering process took place in a welcoming and supportive environment, with careful attention to providing a conducive atmosphere for the participants. Informed consent was sought and obtained from all research subjects, and they were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point if they experienced discomfort or wished to discontinue their participation. As a gesture of appreciation for their involvement, the research participants were offered light refreshments following the completion of the questionnaires.

## **Procedure**

This research study was conducted within the jurisdiction of District Buner in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Prior to initiating the study, formal meetings were conducted with the academic institution authorities to obtain their approval for gathering information about undergraduate students as part of the data collection process. The research participants (N=500), comprised both male and female undergraduate students residing in the Buner district, were selected from the following educational institutions: Government Post Graduate College Swari Daggar Buner, University of Buner, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Panjtar Buner, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Totalai Buner, and Government Girls Higher Secondary School Chinglai Buner.

## **Results and Discussion**

The purpose of the research study was to examine the effects of father's involvement and absence on adolescent's disruptive behavior. First the psychometric properties of study variables were analyzed through reliability analysis. Table 2 explain the reliability of the tests conducted. Reliability analysis explain the alpha coefficients among the adolescents ranged from .23 to 3.69 for scales used in present research including Extremism and Violence Risk Identification Scale Shah & Qureshi Father's Involvement Inventory (2022). The values of skewness and kurtosis are lesser than 1 which is satisfactory. The values of kurtosis are less than +1 and -1. Both values of skewness and kurtosis show that normality of data is not problematic (*See Table 2*).

**Table 2**  
**Psychometric properties of research variables (N = 500)**

Variables	N	M	Max Statistics	Minimum Statistics	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Standard Error	Statistic	Standard Error
EVRIS	500	2.0564	3.69	.23	.78385	.067	.109	-.467	.218
Valid N	500								

Note. N= Number of research participants, EVRIS = Extremism and Violence Risk Identification Scale, M=Mean and SD=Standard Deviation

**Table 3**  
**Mean, standard deviation and standard error of Mean of the participants (N = 500)**

Demographic Variables	N	M	SD
Father Status of the research participant	500	1.50	.501
Mother Status of research participants	500	1.13	.394
Socio Economic Status	500	2.00	.842
Family status of the research participants	500	1.91	.728
Gender of the research participants	500	1.50	.501
Birth order of research participants	500	1.93	.775

Note. N= Number of research participants, M=Mean and SD=Standard Deviation

Table 3 shows frequency distribution of the demographic variables of the research participants with respect to father status (M=1.50, SD=.501), mother status of the research participants (M=1.13, SD .394), socio economic status (M=2.00; SD=.842), family system (M=1.91; SD=.728), gender (1.50; SD=.501) and birth order of the research participant (N=500; M=.1.93; SD=.775).

**Table 4**  
**Mean, standard deviation and standard error for father's Involved and father' absent research participants on EVRIS (N=500)**

	M	Std. Error	t	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlation Coefficient		
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
Constant		2.346	21.007	.000	2.126	2.565			
FSQ	2.775	.125	3.732	.000	.059	.190	.606	.165	.132
SQFIS	1.964	-.111	-3.328	.001	-.177	-.046	-.603	-.148	-.117

\*\*\*P<.000, Note. EVRIS = Extremism and Violence Risk Identification Scale, FSS= Father Separation Questionnaire, SQFIS= Shah and Qureshi Father Involvement Scale

Table 4 show Mean differences, 't' values and correlation of the variables for father not living research participants (n=250) and father's living research participants (n=250) with extremism and violence risk identification scale. The mean differences of independent variables father's absence and father's involvement (M=2.775, M=1.964) on dependent variable extremism and violence of adolescent show that adolescents of father's absent families have high risk level of extremism and violence as compared to father's involved adolescents. Result indicates highly significant effects on extremism and violence of father absent adolescents by positive correlation of father's absence (r = .606, .165 and .132) with extremism and violence risk identification also verifies the research hypothesis. Results also indicates negative correlation (r = -.603, -.148, and -.117) of father's involvement with adolescent's extremism and violence prove the research hypothesis. The mean difference and t statistics also verifies the results and prove that father's absent adolescents have high level of extremism and violence (t (498) = 3.732 p < .000\*\*\*) as compared to father's involved adolescents (t (498) = -3.328 p<.000\*\*\*).

## **Discussion**

This study aims to analyze the association between father's involvement and absence with adolescent disruptive behavior in Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, focusing on extremism and violence. Extremism is a highly sensitive issue for national security in Pakistan. The hypothesis was that "Adolescents not living with their fathers exhibit higher levels of extremism and violence." Statistical analysis of father-absent adolescents ( $n=250$ , mean age  $M=16.9549$ ,  $SD=1.8694$ ,  $EVRIS M=2.775$ ,  $t(498) = 3.732$ ) indicates that adolescents without fathers have a higher risk of extremism and violence compared to those with involved fathers. The Pearson Correlation coefficient also shows a positive relationship between paternal deprivation and high levels of extremism and violence ( $r = .606, .165, .132$ ), confirming that adolescents living without fathers exhibit more disruptive behavior than those with fathers.

The second hypothesis was that "Adolescents with involved fathers exhibit lower levels of extremism and violence." Statistical analysis of  $n=250$  father-involved adolescents (mean age  $M=16.9549$ ,  $SD=1.8694$ ) shows a negative relationship between father's involvement and extremism and violence. Adolescents from intact families exhibit lower levels of extremism and violence ( $N=250$ ,  $M=1.964$ ,  $r = -.603, -.148, -.117$ ), confirming the hypothesis. The  $t$  statistics ( $M=1.964$ ,  $SD=1.8694$ ,  $t(498) = -3.328$ ,  $p < .000^{***}$ ) also support these results. The findings indicate a positive relationship between extremism and violence with father absence and a negative correlation with father involvement. King and Sobolewski (2006) found that paternal engagement was linked to a reduced occurrence of both externalizing and internalizing symptoms, such as acting out, disruptive behavior, antisocial conduct, depression, feelings of sadness, and dishonesty. Flouri and Buchanan (2003) demonstrated that children whose fathers spent more time with their families and maintained positive relationships were shielded from psychological disturbances at age 7 and were less susceptible to psychological distress at age 16 compared to children with absent or neglectful fathers. Javed (2013) highlighted several critical factors contributing to extremism, including economic drivers, political drivers, security and geostrategic drivers, social drivers, systemic flaws, education, weak state, erosion of community living, rapid urbanization, communication, fixed mindset responses, and the Baluchistan factor. This study builds on Javed's research by introducing the crucial factor of paternal unavailability and non-residence in relation to adolescents in Pakistan.

Previous studies have also underscored the link between a father's absence and the development of extremist tendencies in children. Erikson (1968) discovered that children without fathers often experienced identity diffusion, which could lead to extremism and terrorism. Schwartz et al. (2009) associated father's absence with identity diffusion and a lack of direction, potentially leading to extremism. Additionally, Dammann et al. (2011), Igarashi et al. (2009), Hoeve et al. (2009), and Lösel et al. (2018) examined the significance of a father's presence or absence in the context of extremism. Baier (2018) suggested that critical life events such as parental divorce or the death of a parent play a crucial role in the development of identity diffusion, which can contribute to extremism. Research on extremism has frequently investigated family crises as influential risk factors for extremist tendencies. The Transformative Learning Theory also supports the idea that family crises and neglect can serve as the foundation for radicalization. The current study aligns with prior research and proves that father's absence is strongly associated with adolescent extremism compared to father's active involvement.

## **Conclusion**

The present research concludes that father's absence is an important cause of extremism and violence in adolescent that seeks to develop the extremist ideas. Little attention has been paid to this key driver of extremism and violence in Pakistan. The government authorities should address this issue by pragmatic approach. The researchers



should also broaden their research approach in addressing extremism and violence to the basic unit of the society, which is family.

### **Recommendations**

- Academics Institutions should play their role by proper training the faculty members for improving tolerance in adolescents under their supervision.
- Religious scholars should address this social issue in their Juma Addresses with respect to Islamic teachings for improving tolerance and considering others viewpoint.
- Researchers should also play their role in addressing extremism and violence by conducting research with other variables.
- Government Authorities should address the issue of extremism and violence, making strategies for reducing abroad jobs and establishing Rehabilitation center up to district and tehsil level for addressing emotional issues in adolescents.

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