

# Children's perceptions of fathers' contributions after parental separation

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## Abstract

Parental separation alters family dynamics and may affect children's psychological well-being, particularly through changes in paternal involvement. While previous studies have largely focused on parental perspectives or childhood outcomes, limited attention has been given to how children in young adulthood perceive fathers' contributions after divorce. This study aimed to explore young adults' perceptions of fathers' contributions following parental separation from emotional, relational, and financial perspectives. Using a qualitative exploratory-descriptive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five young adult women aged 24–28 years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling with inclusion criteria: individuals who experienced parental divorce during childhood or adolescence, were currently in young adulthood, and were able to reflect on their emotional, social, and psychological experiences related to parental separation. Thematic analysis revealed five superordinate themes: emotional support, relationship with the father, psychological impact of parental separation, financial conditions, and expectations toward family relationships. Findings indicate that emotional presence and relational quality were perceived as more meaningful than financial contributions alone. This study highlights the importance of understanding post-divorce father involvement from children's subjective perspectives and supports the development of post-separation parenting practices that prioritize emotional engagement.

## Keywords

Children's perception, emotional support, father's contribution, parental separation, post-separation parenting

## Introduction

The phenomenon of divorce has become a growing global social issue, particularly in Indonesia. Changes in family structure due to parental separation not only affect relational dynamics but also impact children's emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in 2023 there were 408,347 divorce cases, with disputes as the main cause (61.67%) (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). This surge shows the complexity of modern family relationships and poses a major challenge in fulfilling children's rights (KPAI, 2022).

A crucial aspect in this context is the involvement of fathers after divorce. The quality of the father-child relationship plays an important role in shaping the child's identity, emotional resilience, and social skills (Moen, 2023; Siron *et al.*, 2023). However, various studies indicate that father involvement tends to decrease after divorce, whether in the form of direct interaction, emotional presence, or practical contributions (Haux & Platt, 2021). Factors such as the quality of the relationship before divorce, living arrangements, economic status, and cultural values also influence the extent to which fathers remain present in their children's lives (Koster & Castro-Martín, 2021).

However, not all forms of father involvement are positive. In some cases, children experience dysfunctional involvement, such as coercive control, intimidation, emotional manipulation, and excessive supervision that limits their freedom (Katz *et al.*, 2020; Rogers & Berger, 2023). This

pattern can worsen children's psychological condition, increase anxiety, trauma, and feelings of insecurity, even though the relationship appears to be active (Larouche *et al.*, 2024).

Various countries have responded to this challenge through public policy. In Norway, for example, mandatory mediation is implemented for separated parents to balance parenting rights and responsibilities, including encouraging father involvement (Kitterød & Wiik, 2017). However, studies in Scandinavian countries warn that the application of gender equality principles in parenting can be counterproductive if it ignores a history of domestic violence, thereby endangering children (Nikupeteri *et al.*, 2022).

The impact of divorce on children, especially adolescents who are in a vulnerable stage of development, includes physical, psychological, and social aspects (Atika & Itryah, 2024). Unfortunately, most studies still focus on the contribution of fathers from the perspective of mothers or administrative data. In fact, children's perceptions as direct subjects are the most relevant source for understanding the

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meaning and impact of father involvement (Santos *et al.*, 2022).

In Norway, there has been a shift from sole custody to shared custody, with nearly 40% of children living alternately with both parents after divorce (Morbech *et al.*, 2023). However, children's perceptions of their fathers' contributions remain influenced by the broader psychosocial context. Children from conflicted families or vulnerable groups often exhibit complex relationship dynamics and require an approach that is sensitive to cultural background and trauma history (Siron *et al.*, 2023).

In the Indonesian context, after parental divorce, children generally live with their mothers. Meanwhile, fathers' involvement tends to decline due to social constructs that place fathers as the primary breadwinners. However, fathers' involvement still contributes to children's psychological well-being and self-esteem, even if they do not live together (Paramitha & Hendriani, 2023). Studies in Indonesia also show that fathers as single parents are able to build safe and meaningful relationships with their children, despite facing role, limited social support, and cultural stigma. Family and school support play an important role in the success of such parenting (Astuti, 2016; Lestari & Amaliana, 2020).

Social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills have been shown to be stronger predictors of adolescent well-being, academic success, and social relationships than personality traits alone (Soto *et al.*, 2022). The study by Fisher *et al.* (2021) also emphasizes that fathers' involvement remains emotionally significant in extreme situations, such as caring for a seriously ill child, even though their contribution is often overlooked in social policies and services.

Research shows that father involvement remains emotionally meaningful even in challenging family circumstances (Fisher *et al.*, 2023). The absence of a father figure is also reported to have an impact on how individuals perceive attachment, trust, and interpersonal relationships throughout their development (Anjani *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, the contribution of fathers after separation needs to be understood not only as physical presence or financial support, but as the quality of the relationship as perceived by the child, especially in the context of increased loss of father-child contact after divorce (Haux & Platt, 2021).

For some young adult women, the absence of a father figure in childhood has a long-term impact on shaping their views on love, trust, and interpersonal relationships. The absence of a father figure as their first love can affect the basic foundations of building self-identity and social trust (Anjani *et al.*, 2024). A father's involvement in post-divorce parenting is not just about physical presence or financial support. Emotional presence, relationship stability, and meaningful interaction are essential foundations for a child's psychological development (Spaan *et al.*, 2022). The high number of fathers who lose contact with their children after divorce, as reflected in a longitudinal study in the UK, highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics of this relationship in a broader context (Haux & Platt, 2021).

Although much research has been conducted on divorce and father involvement, most studies still focus on school-age children or early adolescents, and place the perspective of parents, especially mothers, as the main source of data. This approach tends to emphasize structural aspects such

as custody arrangements, visitation frequency, and financial contributions, while the subjective experiences of children as the ones directly experiencing the dynamics of post-divorce relationships are often marginalized (Haux & Platt, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022). In addition, the dominant quantitative research has not been able to fully capture the emotional meaning, ambivalence, and long-term reflections of children on the role of the father after divorce. Therefore, there is still a research gap regarding how children, especially those who have entered young adulthood, interpret the emotional, relational, and practical contributions of their fathers in their lives.

This study aims to fill this gap by placing the voices of young adults at the center of the analysis, thereby providing a more in-depth and contextual understanding of post-divorce father involvement and its implications for long-term psychological well-being. This study aims to explore children's perceptions of their fathers' post-divorce contributions from emotional, social, and practical aspects. Using a qualitative approach and placing the voices of children as the main subject, this study is expected to provide a more contextual and humanistic understanding of the dynamics of father-child relationships within changed family structures. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of parenting policies that are more equitable and responsive to the psychosocial needs of children.

## Method

This study used a qualitative approach with an exploratory-descriptive design. This approach was chosen because it is able to capture the subjective meaning and complexity of individual experiences, particularly in understanding the impact of parental divorce on the emotional and social health of children who have reached adulthood. The qualitative approach emphasizes a deep understanding of the social context through rich, contextual, and meaningful data (Campbell *et al.*, 2020).

Exploratory-descriptive design is used to describe phenomena in depth without being bound by rigid statistical hypothesis testing. In this design, the framework is flexible and open to the dynamics of findings in the field, allowing for exploration of the meaning and long-term consequences of divorce in the lives of subjects (Casula *et al.*, 2020). Through this approach, the study is expected to generate contextual insights into the importance of the continued involvement of both parents in supporting the emotional and social well-being of children after divorce.

## Participants

The participants in this study consisted of five adults aged between 24 and 28 years old who were children of divorced parents. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is a technique of deliberately selecting samples based on certain characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Purposive sampling was chosen because it can increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data obtained (Campbell *et al.*, 2020). Although the results of research using this technique are not intended to be generalized broadly, this approach remains valid for understanding the dynamics within the subpopulation that

is the focus of the study, provided that internal and external validity are strictly observed in the design and interpretation of data (Andrade, 2020).

The inclusion criteria established in this study include: (1) individuals who experienced parental divorce during childhood or adolescence, (2) are currently young adults (aged 24–28 years), and (3) are able to reflect on and express the emotional, social, and psychological experiences felt as a result of parental divorce. These criteria were established to ensure that participants were truly appropriate for the context and objectives of the research exploration.

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher first explained the purpose and objectives of the research to the participants. Subsequently, an informed consent form was signed, stating that there was no coercion in participating in the research, that the information provided was only for research purposes, that the participants' identities would be kept confidential, and that the participants had the right to withdraw. The characteristics of the participants in this study are summarized in Table 1.

### Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore in depth the emotional experiences, social interactions, and psychological impacts felt by participants as a result of their parents' divorce. This guide contained flexible, open-ended questions, allowing researchers to adjust the direction of the interview according to the dynamics of the conversation that arose in the field.

Data collection techniques were conducted through individual semi-structured interviews. This approach was chosen because it provides a balance between the structure needed to maintain focus on the research topic and the flexibility to explore new issues that are relevant and arise spontaneously during the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The interviews were conducted using questions covering three main aspects: (1) participants' emotional experiences after divorce, (2) patterns of interaction with each parent, and (3) perceived impacts on daily life.

Interviews as the primary method in qualitative research allow researchers to obtain rich, in-depth, and contextual data through open and reflective interpersonal interactions. However, this method also requires a commitment of time, resources, and high ethical sensitivity in building trust and maintaining the confidentiality of participant information (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

### Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this study used an interactive qualitative analysis approach by integrating the constant comparison technique and the interactive data analysis model from Miles et al. (2019). The constant comparison technique was carried out simultaneously with the data collection process. Through this technique, researchers continuously compared new data with previous data to adjust the focus of questions, interview strategies, participant selection, and determine when to stop the participant recruitment process. This approach is dynamic and allows for a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data analysis process begins at the early stages of data collection and proceeds cyclically through three main stages according to Miles et al. (2019), namely: (1) Data Reduction. The interview data is transcribed thoroughly and accurately. This process involves filtering, selecting, and simplifying relevant information. Each part of the conversation is labeled or coded to facilitate the identification of themes and patterns that emerge. (2) Data Presentation. The reduced data is organized in the form of a matrix or thematic table that displays related conversation excerpts. This presentation aims to facilitate interpretation and assist researchers in formulating relationships between categories and key themes that represent the meaning of the participants' experiences. (3) Drawing Conclusions and Data Validity. Conclusions were drawn through the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships between classified phenomena. These conclusions were formed into a conceptual framework representing the dynamics of fathers' involvement after divorce. Data validity was maintained through member checking to ensure the appropriateness of the participants' experiences, as well as peer debriefing with academics competent in qualitative research to strengthen critical reflection on the process and results of data interpretation. In addition, the process of reporting the results of this study refers to the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) guidelines to ensure transparency, traceability, and quality of reporting in qualitative studies (Paul & Bandyopadhyay, 2018).

### Result

This study presents a thematic analysis of the informants' experiences regarding the dynamics of their relationships with their parents, particularly their fathers, after their parents' divorce. The analysis was conducted through repeated reading of the data, coding of meaningful statements, grouping of codes into categories, and development of superordinate themes that emerged consistently from the informants' narratives. Table 2 summarizes the main themes and descriptions of each informant's experiences, reflecting variations in emotional support, the quality of the relationship with the father, the psychological impact felt, financial conditions, and expectations regarding the parents' relationship at present. This presentation aims to provide a comparative overview of the patterns of experiences of each informant. The thematic analysis and description of the thematic analysis results are illustrated in Table 2.

From the results of the study, five superordinate themes were found that describe a child's perception of their father's contribution to their life after divorce. The five themes include 1) Emotional support; 2) Relationship with father; 3) Impact of parental divorce; 4) Financial conditions; and 5) Expectations for the relationship.

One of the most prominent themes in the participants' experiences was the emotional support they received after their parents' divorce. This theme emerged from the participants' narratives about their parents' presence, attention, and emotional responses in dealing with changes in family structure. Emotional support was perceived as an important foundation in helping children understand the situation they

**Table 1.** Brief description of the participants' conditions at the time of their parents' divorce.

Initials	Age	Gender	Time of Divorce	Living Arrangements	Economic Status at the Time
MN	24	Female	2002	Living with Mother	The family's economic status declined due to the father's loss of income, forcing the mother to work hard.
H	26	Female	2013	Living with mother	Economic status has declined. Mother had previously stable assets but suffered losses due to financial irregularities committed by Father.
SN	28	Female	2018	Living with mother	Simple economic status with main source of income from father.
KN	26	Female	2018	Living with mother	Upper-middle economic status with main source of income from father.
PNU	26	Female	2005	Lives with father	The family's economic condition is relatively stable with multiple sources of income.

**Table 2.** Regression Analyses of Helicopter Parenting Predicting Psychological Outcomes

Superordinate Theme	Informant 1 (MN)	Informant 2 (H)	Informant 3 (SN)	Informant 4 (KN)	Informant 5 (PNU)
Emotional Support	Support from mother, transactional father	No support from father	Lack of support from both parents	Limited from father, dominant mother	Strong support from father
Relationship with father	Limited due to blended family	Loss of contact	Distant relationship, not intense	Good but tense	Very close relationship
Impact of Parental Divorce	Emotional wounds become life lessons	Devastated and burdened	Emotional impact emerges in adulthood	Trauma affects relationships	The loss of a mother highlights the role of the father
Financial circumstances	No financial support	Covered by the mother's family	Limited financial support	Father continues to provide for the family	Father as the main breadwinner
Expectations for the relationship	Hoping for an improved relationship	Happiness for parents	Accepting the situation	Harmonious relationships without conflict	Acceptance of the current situation

were facing, manage feelings of loss, and build a sense of security amid the instability that occurred.

In the aftermath of divorce, emotional support from parents is greatly needed by a child. Emotional instability usually causes children to feel sad and confused about the changes occurring within the household. Fulfilling their respective responsibilities can provide clarity to children about their parents' duties in meeting their needs even though they are divorced.

*"My mother has been fighting alone from the beginning to fulfill all my needs. She does whatever it takes so that I can live properly."* (MN: 9-32).

*"In terms of emotional support, as a daughter, it was more than enough, because from the beginning, from childhood, he was always there for us..."* (PNU: 58-61)

Meanwhile, emotional support after divorce from the family also helps children's emotional stability in experiencing major changes in their lives. Efforts to provide protection and affection from the family are one form of emotional support felt by children.

*"I am grateful that there were many people who gave me support at that time, especially my family and friends. If it weren't for my family, I might not be this strong..."* (H: 66-77)

*"So, support from a partner who understands is what has helped me get to where I am today."* (SN: 271-274).

The second theme that emerged from the thematic analysis was related to the relationship between children and their fathers after divorce. Changes in family structure not

only affect living arrangements, but also alter the intensity, quality, and continuity of interactions between fathers and children. In this context, father-child relationships are perceived differently by participants, ranging from distant and disconnected relationships to relationships that remain intact and meaningful even though the parents no longer live together.

Divorce causes major changes in family dynamics. The relationship between fathers and children is also very important in supporting children's emotional and psychological development, so interactions between fathers and children greatly affect children's well-being. However, children often feel that their fathers are not sufficiently involved in their upbringing after divorce. A father usually does not have sufficient access or time with his child. As a result, the child feels neglected or underappreciated by his father. Theme 2 is illustrated based on the following interview excerpt.

*"But with my father, for 18 years it wasn't good. because my mother forbade me to see him. The reason was that he had not provided any financial support from the time we separated until I was 18 years old."* (MN:31-35).

*"It's really not good. My dad is still around, but it's like he's not there because he doesn't care about his kids."* (H: 51-52).

Meanwhile, fathers who remain present and provide for their children's physical and emotional needs allow children to experience the positive role of a father. The ability of parents

to continue to cooperate in raising their children after divorce helps children maintain their relationships without feeling confused.

*"My relationship with both my parents is fine, it's okay. It's the same as before the divorce, except that my father and mother don't live together anymore."* (KN:34-37).

A father's consistency in providing a sense of security to his children also shows positive interaction even after separating from his partner.

*"... he was the figurehead because even before my mother passed away, he was the one who played a major role in caring for us."* (PNU: 16-21).

The third theme identified in the analysis results relates to the impact of parental separation on children's psychological experiences. The event of separation is perceived as a major change that affects the child's emotional state, how they view relationships, and the process of long-term adjustment. These impacts do not always appear uniformly, but develop according to the age, life experiences, and relational context of each participant.

Every child responds to divorce differently. However, the psychological impact of divorce is inevitable. The psychological shock experienced by children can affect emotional, social, and behavioral changes. Divorce causes children to feel a great sense of loss, especially if they previously felt that their family relationship was stable. Children will feel deep sadness and often experience stress and depression because their parents have separated.

*"Of course I was devastated, like I couldn't believe that in an instant everything was gone, and then I felt sad, angry, and really ashamed. I didn't go to school for several months."* (H: 22-25).

*"Of course I felt sad. Really sad. I felt like, well, like my world had collapsed."* (KN: 21-23).

Although parental divorce often has negative effects, as children grow older, those who experience divorce can learn to make sense of life and human relationships, which can lead to strong personal development.

*"Until now, I've only learned a lesson for myself that relationships are not always smooth sailing, but I still hope that when I get married, I can have a lasting relationship with my partner, and even if there are problems, we can solve them together."* (MN: 18-24).

Children who witness their parents' divorce become more committed to creating healthy relationships. They will be more careful in choosing a partner and strive to maintain open communication in their relationships.

*"Yes, I just realized that it has a big impact, especially on my partner. So maybe unconsciously I behave this way, for example, when there is a problem, I want to avoid it."* (SN: 239-243).

The fourth theme that emerged from the thematic analysis relates to the financial condition of families after parental separation. Changes in family economic arrangements are a real and immediate experience for children, especially in terms of meeting daily needs and continuing support from parents. In this context, financial contributions are perceived as a form of parental responsibility that is intertwined with a sense of security, stability, and children's understanding of their father's role after divorce.

Changes in financial circumstances also often occur after divorce. Divorce can affect economic resources, because couples who previously shared responsibility for maintaining financial stability in the home now have to manage their finances separately. Meanwhile, mothers who become the primary caregivers after divorce have the responsibility of providing for all of their children's needs. As a result of divorce, mothers will work more to support their children.

*"Nothing at all, all my living expenses that should have been my father's responsibility were covered by my mother."* (MN: 65-67)

*"Financial support is probably 90% from my mother. Including college tuition and everything else."* (SN: 172-175).

Often, the involvement of the extended family in meeting the needs of the child is far greater than the involvement of the father in fulfilling his responsibilities.

*"Not at all. In fact, it was my mother's siblings who always helped me financially. They even paid for my college tuition and pocket money back then. Now, my husband takes care of that. My father has completely disengaged from his responsibilities."* (H: 56-61).

A father's responsibility is not only about directly fulfilling his children's needs, but also about contributing to their long-term well-being. Financial support can be one way to ensure the well-being of children after divorce.

*"When it comes to financial needs, my father covers 100% of our living expenses, tuition fees, and other necessities. My mother doesn't work, so my father is the one who takes care of all the financial matters."* (KN:119-122)

*"After my mother passed away, we used to have everything we needed because both of my parents were working. Now, after my mother's death, it's only him, only Tetta, who handles all the finances."* (PNU: 45-50).

The fifth theme identified in the analysis results relates to children's expectations of family support and relationships after their parents' separation. These expectations reflect the process of acceptance, emotional maturity, and how children reinterpret their relationships with their parents as they grow older. Despite experiencing changes and limitations in family relationships, children continue to aspire to healthier, more stable, and meaningful relationships, both for themselves and for their parents.

As a child, having hope and support for divorced parents so that their future lives will be much better. Positive expectations are also influenced by age and emotional conditions formed after divorce. Children still have hopes of seeing their parents live happily and stably and have a desire to establish healthier relationships even though they no longer live together.

*"I still hope that when I get married, I can have a lasting relationship with my partner, and even if there are problems, we can solve them together."* (MN: 21-24)

*"I hope that my relationship with my parents will improve in the future, that there will be no problems, nothing, that when we talk, it will be fine, no anger, no offense taken. The important thing is that everything is fine."* (KN: 233-239).

In addition, children's support for their parents to find new partners is also intended so that parents can experience consistent love and attention from partners who are much better suited to them.

*"I hope Tetta meets people who, what is it, want him to get married. We want that one thing..."* (PNU:246-252)

*"I hope they are happy. I hope my father can be happy with a good partner, someone who supports him and accepts him."* (SN: 316-320).

## Discussion

The results of this study reveal five main themes related to children's perceptions of their fathers' contributions after divorce, namely emotional support, relationship with their father, the impact of parental separation, financial conditions, and expectations regarding family relationships. These findings show that fathers' involvement after divorce varies greatly and is influenced by various factors, including relational dynamics, economic conditions, and the emotional maturity of the child.

Emotional support emerges as the most crucial aspect for children's psychological well-being after divorce. Children who do not receive emotional support from their fathers tend to experience emotional instability, feelings of neglect, and prolonged psychological stress. Conversely, the presence of consistent emotional support can build a sense of security and stability, while strengthening children's resilience in dealing with traumatic experiences (Harahap *et al.*, 2024; Siron *et al.*, 2023). These findings are in line with the study by Mufaroha & Yosyva (2024), which identified a higher risk of emotional and behavioral disorders in children from divorced families without adequate support. In addition, Atika & Itryah (2024) emphasized that the quality of life of adolescents after divorce is influenced by social support and the ability to adapt to changes in family relationships.

The relationship between fathers and children after divorce shows a wide spectrum, ranging from disconnection to strong attachment. The dominance of mothers as primary caregivers in social and legal practices often causes a rift in the relationship between children and their fathers (Zimmermann *et al.*, 2022). Haux & Platt (2021) also found that the father's involvement before divorce is important for the continuity of the relationship, but without consistent emotional support, the relationship is at risk of deteriorating over time. This shows that the father's physical presence alone is not enough without continuous emotional involvement.

The psychological impact of parental separation is significant, both in the short and long term. Children experience a range of negative emotions, such as sadness, anger, and anxiety, and may even lose their sense of direction in life. However, this study also shows that some children are able to construct these traumatic experiences into motivation and valuable lessons for building healthier relationships (Atika & Itryah, 2024). This reinforces (Tanjung, 2024) findings regarding the development of adaptive coping mechanisms that emerge with age and social support.

In terms of financial conditions, although this is an easily identifiable aspect, it does not always correlate with the father's emotional involvement. Most participants expressed disappointment with fathers who did not fulfill their financial obligations, but some also indicated that consistent financial involvement provided a sense of security and stability in life (Spijker *et al.*, 2022). These findings underscore that financial contributions should not replace meaningful emotional presence (Setiawan *et al.*, 2024).

Expectations regarding family relationships reflect the level of emotional maturity of children after separation. Most participants wanted their parents to remain happy and have healthy relationships, even with new partners. This is consistent with the findings of Masruroh *et al.* (2024), which state that children with greater emotional maturity are better able to show empathy and manage disappointment constructively. Moen (2023) resource and crisis model emphasizes that social and emotional support is crucial in helping children navigate the changes brought about by divorce and reducing the risk of stress.

Scientifically, this study fills a gap in the literature, which has tended to focus on school-aged children or the mother's perspective. By taking young adult participants, this study provides a long-term understanding of the meaning of father involvement after divorce, as well as forming the basis for important recommendations for inclusive and sustainable parenting policies, not only during childhood but also in the next stage of development. However, this study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the number of participants was relatively limited, and all participants were young adult women. This condition limits the diversity of perspectives, especially from boys or individuals with different gender experiences. Second, this study used a retrospective approach, which relies on participants' memories and reflections on their childhood and adolescent experiences. The long-term reflection process has the potential to be influenced by memory bias, reinterpretation of meaning, and the emotional condition of participants at the time of the interview.

Third, this study does not reconstruct participants' experiences chronologically and does not explore in detail the changing dynamics of father-child relationships at each stage of development. As a result, variations in the forms of father involvement from childhood to young adulthood have not been described longitudinally. Fourth, although the theme of living arrangements emerged in the participants' descriptions, this study did not explicitly distinguish between the experiences of children living with their father, mother, or alternating living arrangements in the thematic analysis. This limits our understanding of the direct influence of post-separation parenting patterns on children's perceptions. Fifth, this study focuses on the perspective of children as the main subjects and does not involve the perspectives of fathers or mothers. This approach enriches the subjective understanding of children, but does not allow for triangulation of experiences between family members.

Therefore, the results of this study are contextual and not intended to be generalized broadly. Further research is recommended to involve participants with more diverse gender and age backgrounds, use a longitudinal design, and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of fathers' involvement after separation.

## Conclusion

This study shows that the contribution of fathers after divorce is perceived differently by young adult children, covering emotional, relational, and financial aspects. The main findings

confirm that the emotional presence of fathers plays a more meaningful role than financial contributions alone in supporting the psychological well-being of children. The quality of the father-child relationship before and after divorce, as well as the available social support, also influence how children interpret the role of the father in their life trajectory. By placing the perspective of young adult children as the main focus, this study enriches the understanding of post-divorce father involvement as a dynamic and subjectively meaningful relationship.

Theoretically, this study emphasizes the importance of the child's perspective in examining post-divorce father involvement and reinforces a relational approach that emphasizes the emotional dimension. Practically, these findings underscore the need for post-divorce family support that encourages sustained emotional involvement from fathers. From a policy perspective, the research results support the development of post-divorce parenting policies that are oriented towards the best interests of the child, taking into account the quality of the father-child relationship, not just structural and financial aspects.

## Declaration

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### Author contributions

The researcher is fully responsible for the entire research process, from formulating the research idea and objectives, developing the research design, and collecting data through semi-structured interviews. The author also conducted qualitative data analysis, wrote the research results, and compiled all parts of the article, including the abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research.

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