

The Effects Of Fatherlessness On Girls

Posted on September 19, 2019

Problem Statement

Being a quick observer, I have come across some girls who are entirely independent and have no fear of anyone in the family, whereas, on the other hand, there are some girls who are quite shy and unable to speak in public. Upon a little bit of investigation, I came to know some of them miss their father, and some of them are not afraid of their mom as their fathers are not living with them; so the common thing was fatherlessness. The term fatherlessness includes all the fathers who are separated, divorced, imprisoned, travel for the sake of business, are in the military, and are absent more than their presence. These fathers do not interact with their children and play no decisive role in their development. Kristol (1994) found that daughters who live without their fathers usually have cognitive declines and poor academic achievement. Research also indicates that being brought up in a family where the father is absent has a negative impact on both children. When the relationship with the father is disturbed with the daughter, she will not be able to see other relationships positively and will develop the image of all the men around to be like her father.

According to Calvin (1993) states, there are many studies that have demonstrated that a girl's initial relationship with her dad impacts the ways she will view all men—in her personal as well as profession. He further added that the girls who experience abandonment would probably encounter higher vocational issues, for example, burnout, low aspiration, and efficiently being threatened by male authority figures. Such girls also make a fantasy of their dad and invest years looking for a man to satisfy that fantasy through a close relationship. Calvin additionally talks about the idea that those females who experience fatherlessness tend to be clingy towards their beloved nearly in a suffocating way that they have a constant fear of being abandoned, similar as they were fathers left them once.

Similarly, Christiani (2003) states that fatherless girls tend to have a restless attachment style in intimate relationships, which implies that they are less willing to leave a relationship regardless of any social or relational issues. She also found that fatherless women have a capacity to have long-term relationships -which might be negative compared to other women because the abandonment sometimes evokes something positive within a person, as indicated by relational theory.

According to my observation, the father-daughter relationship is of significant importance in a variety of domains. But death, abandonment, and divorce are all father's absences, but all three affect the development of daughters differently. A study has shown the age at which a girl loses her father is significant, as it profoundly impacts her perception related to males, her academics, and the world around her (Blankenhorn, 1996).

Research Question

What are the effects of fatherlessness on girls?

Methodology

Sample

The sample of the present study consisted of fatherless girls. The sample was comprised of 14 females with a wide range of ages starting with 20 years. Given below is the graphical representation of our sample.

The graphs showed that out of 14, 12 were Blacks, whereas two did not disclose their ethnicity. All of them were educated, as can be seen in the graph.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected using online survey software. The current study was descriptive, but as it had a focus on the fatherless girls, soe desired sample was not easy to locate. That is why the snowball sampling technique was used; this is anon probability technique that is used to gather data from a sample that is rare. So, in this study, by using the snowball sampling technique, the female who completed the online survey form transferred the link to any known one who was also fatherless. A questionnaire was designed to explore the effect of fatherlessness on girls.

To encourage the participation of females in the study, an online survey software was used, and participants were approached through snowball sampling. At the beginning of the survey, the purpose of the study, the reason behind contacting those participants, and the ways how the collected to date will be utilized by the researcher (Walonick, 2004). This was done to clarify different questions if aroused in the minds of participants. They were told that their participation in the study was on a voluntary basis, and they were allowed to leave the survey anytime they wanted. They were also told that their anonymity would be maintained and collected data would only be used for research purposes only.

To determine the effect of fatherlessness on females, the questionnaire was designed that contained 56 questions, out of which seven questions were related to the demographics of the sample, including age, ethnicity, education, marital status, and presence of children. Some of them were funnel questions like *'Are you a mother?'* then *'if you have children, has your father loss affected you as a mother?'* The other items of the questionnaire included questions related to the effect of fatherlessness on social development, e.g., *'If you had siblings, how did your father's absence affect your relationship, if at all?'*, emotional development, e.g., *'Do you think you have anger issues?'*,

mental development, e.g., *'Do you consider yourself aggressive or headstrong?'* psychological development, e.g., *'Do you think that you have a fear of commitment?'* and spiritual development, e.g., *'Please select the positive things you have gained in your life, if any, despite your loss,'* financial issues, e.g., *'How was your family's financial situation after your father was gone?'*, and academic performance, e.g., *'Do you believe that your father loss affected your decisions on your abilities regarding academic performance?'*.

Coding

The use of Online Survey Software to collect data simplified the coding process significantly. The data was automatically coded upon downloading. The majority of the questions in the questionnaire were descriptive and contained a checklist. So the responses were obtained in descriptive as well as graphical form. Moreover, the collected responses were then transformed into an Excel sheet.

Data Analysis

The purpose of a quantitative study is to quantify the effect of fatherlessness on girls. In this study, the researcher has focused on investigating the effect of fatherlessness on girls (Appendix A). The analysis resulted in a set of frequencies on the checklist. The first level of analysis was to determine the frequency of each response, so the responses are given below. Findings of the present study indicated that 36% of the females experienced fatherlessness due to their father's death, 14% experienced it due to the parental divorce, 7% experienced it as their father abandoned the family, for 14 % the father was emotionally unavailable, 14% of them had an addicted father, 7% experienced as their father gave her up for adoption, and 7% responded that she has never met to their father. Upon asking them at which age they have gone through the phenomenon of fatherlessness, 28% of them were below the age of 5, 57% of them were between 11 to 15 years of age, 7% of them were between the age range of 16-20 and 7% were over 30 years of age. So, the responses indicated that there were a variety of respondents who participated in our study and experienced fatherlessness at different ages.

Father is a significant figure whose presence is essential in one's life. Both girls and boys find it difficult to spend their life without their fathers. In our study, 14% of the females reported that they think about their father on a daily basis and 14% on a weekly basis and this was the major reason that their life was being affected. Almost 85% of them received counseling/therapy/life coaching to accept this great loss, and 63% of them reported that they have found peace and accepted what has happened. Although some of them had a 'stand-in' father figure in their life. 21% reported a stepfather, 21% reported an uncle, 7% reported a mother and 7% reported that their mother was that 'stand-in' person.

Females also suffer from psychological issues that hinder their performance in daily life. Even being a mother, losing a father by whatever means has a significant influence, as 50% responded that this

loss has negatively impacted them.

As 42% experienced the fear of being abandoned, 33% had a fear of commitment, and 16% remained the victim of violence. Some of them have undergone relationship and commitment issues due to having a fear of commitment, as 43% reported that they still have a fear of commitment, and because of this reason, 29% of them reported that they tested a man by leaving him to see if he will come back or not as the figure 4 indicates.

So 7% of them got married thrice, whereas 15% of them were married more than even three times.

Fatherlessness has a significant impact on the mental health of the girls, as 71% of them have to struggle with Alcohol, and 29% have eating issues. Upon asking what was the financial situation of the family at the time when the father was gone, 21.43% of them said that they were financially stable, 35.71% were somewhat economically stable, and 14.29% had to work at a young age, 7.14% of their mom has to do multiple jobs, and 21.43% were at the level of poverty.

The academics of 57% of girls were also affected by the fatherlessness.

The experience of fatherlessness is so pathetic that it becomes difficult to get adjusted to life. At that time social and family support serves an important function. In our study, the females received support from their significant others, as the majority of the girls received support from their mothers (15%), siblings (15%), and friends (15%). Moreover, another type of support received was from grandparents (8%), stepfather (8%), teachers (8%), other family members (8%), therapists, some special ones (8%), and additional support. Moreover, losing father-figure sometimes affects the relationship between the mother and siblings, as that was earlier. In our sample, 21% reported that they got close to their mother after losing their father, 14% reported that their relationship had changed dramatically, 14% reported their relationship had changed in some way, but 14% also reported that they were further apart after the loss. 235 of the females also reported that they have a close relationship with their mothers at present, whereas 23% reported that their relationship is sometimes close and sometimes not close. In the case of siblings, 29% reported that their siblings' relationship had changed a lot now as they see things from a different perspective, 14% said that they got closed after the loss, but 14% said that their relationship got estranged, while 7% reported they started understanding each other's struggle. Almost 36% of them have reported that they would have accomplished more if they were not fatherless as the figure indicates.

The loss of a significant figure like the father is a great loss, but coping is a part of life. Some people go for problem-focused coping, and some go for emotion-focused coping. In our sample, the girls reported that they have also coped with the stress and loss with positive coping as the majority of them (46%) used music as the best coping mechanism, 23% went for self-help/inspirational reading, 15% went for physical fitness, and 15% for writing. The loss of father sometimes adds something positive in us and the given study, several positive things like soul of a survivor, meaningful life, resiliency, forgiveness, peace, self-confidence, ability to be a strong friend, a family friend, strong bond with mother, creative abilities, fulfillment through giving back were reported by 14%, 14%, 7%,

7%, 7%, 7%, 7%, 7%, 7%, 7%, and 7% of participants respectively. 63% of them also reported that they are now confident.

It is quite difficult to live without a father even if you know that they have gone, and the absence made us sad on several occasions as 30% of participants reported that they missed their father on fathers-day, 20% on their wedding day, 20% on their children's life events, 10% on fathers' birthday, 10% on their childbirth, and 10% reported when they were hospitalized.

36% of participants reported that their father's loss was the biggest loss of their life, whereas 55% reported that it had changed their life in some way. 54% reported that their emotional life had suffered a lot, 15% reported their mental life suffered, 15% also faced issues related to finance, and 8% reported psychological issues.

43% of girls reported that they did not consider their father a 'good man', and all of them were having no guilt upon this thought and confession. And 73% were in view that their mother did not make good choices regarding relationships with men.

Conclusion

Conclusively, conducting survey research provided me the opportunity to go through the importance of the quantitative study. I have learned many things related to data collection and administrating the questionnaires, along with compiling the results. Rather than using a checklist, a mental and psychological health questionnaire, along with other standardized questionnaires with high alpha reliability, could be used to have a better picture. I have learned a lot about planning research and how to prepare certain tools for measuring the phenomenon. During research, I also came to know that the response rate is quite low and data collection is a hectic process. Although I was conducting an online survey, many respondents were not willing to participate. The length of the questionnaire also affected the responses as it consisted of 58 items and some items were sensitive. So this study has also helped me learn new things that the researcher must be vigilant enough as certain topics are quite emotional. Moreover, the sample was quite small, but as my sample characteristics had some limitations, it is recommended to approach a large amount of sample in the future.

References

Blankenhorn, D. (1996). The first man in every girl's life. *Headway*, 8(9), 10.

Calvin, T. (1993). Your heart belonged to Daddy...and then he "abandoned" you! *Cosmopolitan*, 214, 161-163.

Christiani, M. (2003). Adolescent females' strategic behavior within romantic relationships. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 22(1), 36-42.

Kristol, I. (1994). Life without father. *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 224(88), A18.

Walonick, D. S. (2004). *Survival statistics: Designing and using questionnaires*. Bloomington, MN: StatPac.