



The significance of paternal love and affirmation on the girl child.

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Abstract

In most house-holds where a father has been actively involved in the up-bringing of children, the girl child tends to be more closely knit to their fathers and their relationships are unbound. I seek to explore the views of women who have grown with their father and attained fatherly love and approval and those who have had absentee fathers who re-appeared in their adulthood or those who were either alive and not taking responsibilities of a father or who were living in the same household but chose not to be familiar with their daughters or those whose fathers who had passed away before these women became adults.

I seek to explore the effects of the presence or absence of fatherly love and affirmation on the participants' school performance, life-making decisions, career choices, self-esteem and image, and their choices of husbands or dating partners.

Background

The aspect of the oedipus and erectile theories as explained by Freud has been mirrored in our daily social encounters. The boy child at or from age 5 seeks attention from the mother and jealously guards her from the father while the girl child from similar age seeks attention from the father and jealously guards him from the mother, that is the oedipus and erectile complex respectively. Fathers being the head and authority of the family tend to make major family decisions and the children seek approval of their fathers more. A positive father-daughter relationship, according to some researchers, can significantly affect a girl's self esteem and the choices she makes in life.

The personality development of a child appears much dependent on family milieu. The absence of the father from the home may dramatically upset the dynamics of family life. Henry B. Biller & Stephan D. Weiss (2012).

Fathers who have been actively engaged in promoting their daughters intellectual achievements and autonomy, promote her college success in several ways. These daughters are more successful academically than those whose fathers were neglectful or disengaged during her adolescence. (Perkins, 2001).

Methodology

The methodology used is convenient sampling. Defined as using samples that are readily available and convenient. (Monette et al 2008). Ten female participants from different households were conveniently picked. Five were close to their fathers and five were not. Out of the five who were close to their

fathers, two reportedly had no father present from age 10 as their fathers unfortunately passed on. Out of the five that were not close to their fathers, one was brought up by a step father but the biological father re-appeared when she turned 18 years. The method of data collection was through focus group discussions and personalized one on one interview of subjects sharing their experience and thoughts of how the presence of father figure or lack of affected their self esteem, school performance, choice of husband or dating partner, life decisions and choice of career.

Findings:

Impact on school performance:

Out of the 10 participants, 6 of them stated that they believed that academic success is positively attributed to having a positive relationship with the father. One of those who had lost her father at the age of 10 says she would have been an academic giant if the father was alive all through her youth. The other four do not believe in any correlation between school performance and having a good relationship with the father.

Impact on choice of career:

According to the participants, 5 of them do not believe that father's impacted their careers and that being in a certain career is a personal decision. They would not change their choice of careers if their fathers did not approve of the choice they made. The other 5 said that father's would greatly impact on their choice of careers and they were more likely to change their careers if their father did not approve.

Impact on life decisions:

4 out of 10 participants said their fathers have been liberal in their personal decision making processes hence not actively involved. Out of the 4, one never sought any advice almost all of the time because the father was abusive. The remaining 6 participants say they would change their life decisions if their fathers did not approve of them as they believe the father is always right.

Impact on self-esteem:

Out of the 10 participants, only 3 believe that self-esteem can be attributed to a good father daughter relationship. The other 7 believe that self-esteem is a personal issue that cannot be altered by an outside force.

Impact on husband/partner choice:

6 out of the 10 participants would change their choice of husbands if the father did not approve of the men they were dating or planning to get married to. The other 4 believe that whoever they date or get married to is a personal decision and that they cannot alter their decisions based on whether their fathers approved of the man or not. It is however, of interest to note that, all of the 10 participants believed that females who are close to their fathers may get married later in life than those who are not close to their fathers because they tend to compare their male partners to their fathers in terms of characters and alot more. They also all stated that females close to their fathers may initially have

problems in their marriages and relationships because of always consulting the father and the comparison factor.

Discussion:

Research discovered that well fathered daughters are generally more self-reliant, more self-directed, more self-confident and more successful in class and in their business life . (Nielsen, 2007).

Daughters self-esteem is greatly affected by the relationship with her father. Usually if a daughter has low self esteem, it may be because her father was not around or was not a good parent as should have been. If she has high self esteem, likely that her father was present in her life and supportive too. Children whose fathers are more involved in their lives are more satisfied with their lives. (Eggebean & Knoester, 2001).

Research shows that a daughter with a more loving dad has a smarter and successful personality and less likely to be promiscuous. From the study results, only 3 believed that their fathers impacted their self esteem but majority agreed that their fathers impacted positively on their career choice and school performance. Majority of the participants agreed that father's approval was essential in choosing their life partners or husbands and that women who have good relationship with their fathers tend to get married later but have a stable dating life even though they may initially experience pitfalls early in marriage.

Those who had a father figure who was either abusive or absent and did not have a good relationship with their fathers in their lives or at all portrayed a negative attitude towards marriage and relationship, a phenomenon brought out by Bronfenbrenner on a literature that he gave on negative attitudes of black children. These girls developed derogatory attitudes towards males. These attitudes are transmitted by mothers, grandmothers and other significant females and unfortunately are often reinforced by observation of or involvement in destructive male-family relationships.(Bronfenbrenner, 1967).

Conclusions:

It is imperative to state that most girls tend to be drawn closer to their fathers from childhood and that fathers have a great influence in the growth and development of their daughters.

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