

## Effects of Father Absence on Children's Academic Performance

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### Abstract

Historically father has been viewed as presented in a variety of different images to describe the script that they have been fulfilling. They have variously been presented as, normal observer, breadwinner, sex role model, and nurturing. The death of parents is one of the most severe trauma that a child can suffer. The loss of parents causes so many problems that a deprived child faces, among those problems the important problem is the effects on academic performance of children. This research study explain how father absence affect the academic performance of children, for this purpose a sample of 45 subjects is selected from population of same socioeconomic status, with no cultural differences. All the subjects were the students of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The subjects were selected from three types of families, intact father children, died father children and divorced father children and was kept in three groups as: present father group, died father group and divorced father group. The statistical analysis of the results by applying statistical treatment test with critical region =1.4, and significance level =0.10 show that intact father children show better academic performance than absent father children. The dyed father children and divorcee's children show the same academic performance which reveals that father presence play a very significant role in the academic performance of children. The implication of the study will be discussed further.

**Keywords:** academic performance, father presence, absent father

### Introduction

The most frequently mentioned causes of paternal absence are divorce and separation, death and career demands. Of these, divorce and separation differences that paternal absence due to divorce or death can have on a child's emotional development (Amato & Booth, 1991). Probably the least traumatic effects due to paternal deprivation result from prolonged,

but temporary father absence since these effects are reversible. There is also a differential effect of age on the severity of impact of father absence on children versus adolescents (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002). This may well be due to the inferior coping mechanisms of children as compared to those of adolescents, who have achieved increased emotional maturity and have access to supportive social networks in the form of peer groups (Lange & Zagorsky (2001)

explained bereavement can induce three phases effects namely self-neglect, suicide, cardiac illness which is brought by severe stress. In post-industrial time, the light of of educational qualifications to employment and earnings success is a major concern. Studies demonstrate quite conclusively that children who live in a single mother family's score lower on measures of academic achievements than their counterparts in two parent families (Fomby, & Cherlin, 2007).

Although children with step parent families score somewhat higher than children in one parent families, their score are still over a quarter of standard deviation lower than those of children with two biological parents (Ermisch, & Francesconi, 2001; Corak, 2001). Similar gap are found when grades rather than test score are used to measure academic success. Children who live with two biological parents receive the highest grades and children who live with their mother and an unmarried partner receive the lowest grades (Thompson, Hanson, & Mc Lanahan, 1994). School aged children of involved fathers are also better academic achievers, they are more likely to get "A" (Nord & West, 2001), also have better quantitative and verbal skills, have higher grades point average, get better achievement test scores, receive superior grades, perform a year above their expected age level on academic tests, obtain higher scores on reading achievements, or learn more and perform better in school (Murnane, Maynard, & Ohls, 1981). Children of involved fathers are more likely to enjoy school (Scott-Jones, 1984), have a positive attitude towards school, and participate

in extracurricular activities. They are less likely to fail "A" grade.

Delinquency of children, and in particular boys, is promoted by father absence (Cavanagh, & Huston, 2006). The problem with not having father in children's lives can be so severe that they can cause an 86% increase in the likelihood that a child will become a psychotic delinquent. Some of the widely recognized statistics of the ills, and cost to society of father absence include, 90% of all homeless and runaway children, 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions, 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers, 85% of person youths, and talk about promoting a danger to woman, up to 80% of rapist, motivated by displaced anger (Grimm-Wassil, 1994). There is also a threefold increase in the likelihood that a child will be involved in group activity. Over the existing population there is a 200% increase in the likelihood that a child will require psychological treatment, with 85% of all fathers absent children exhibiting behavioral disorders (Sigle-Rushton, & McLanahan, 2002). This is a crucial point for consideration for any attorney, and every judge that separate a fit father from his children. They are promoting behavioral disorders. Low self-esteem is promoted by both girls and boys. There is a 200% increase in attempted or successful teen suicide with 63% of all youth suicide from fatherless homes. Female observation and perception is dependent upon whether they lost their father to divorce, death and at what age. How and why a father is absent will have an impact on emotional and material outcome for the child (Grimm-Wassil 1994).

### *Hypotheses*

H1. The children of intact father families show better academic performance than children from died father families.

H2. Children from intact father families show similar academic performance as children from divorced families.

H3. Died father children and father divorcee's children show the similar academic performance.

### **Method**

#### *Sample*

A sample of 45 subjects was randomly selected from different schools of the District Buner. These subjects were from three kinds of families, and divided into three groups, father a lived group, died father group and divorced father group. The subjects were 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students of age 13 to 15 years male and female. All subjects were of equal socio economic status and there were no cultural differences among the subjects. The data was collected on specifically prepared assessment form. Two years results of the students attested by the head of the concerned institutions were collected.

#### *Variables*

The dependent variable of the study was the effects on academic performance which is measured in terms of examination results. For

this purpose the results of 2010 to 2011 and the results of 2011 to 2012 were collected from the schools of the District Buner. The independent variable is the absence of father which is manipulated in terms of death and divorce. The period of separation of father was from 1 year to 3 years. Socioeconomic status of the subject was not more than 20,000/= per month. The subjects were of the same culture and the age limit was 13 to 15 years. All subjects were the students of Government Schools and they have no any external source of learning e.g. tuition centers etc. T-test is applied to measure the effects on father absence on the academic performance of children on the collected data.

#### *Groups*

This research study was consisted of two groups. The first group was the subjects whose fathers are a lived and these subjects live with intact families. Fathers of these subjects involved in academic performance of their children. This group consisted of 15 subjects, (n=15). The second group was consisted of the subjects whose fathers had divorced or died. This group was further divided in two groups, died father group, (n=15) and divorced father group (n=15).

#### *Material and method*

The data was collected on properly prepared self-assessment form (see figure 2) approved by the supervisor of the researcher. The results of 2010 to 2011 and 2011 to 2012 were collected from different schools of District Buner.

## Results

To see the effects of father absence on the academic performance of children, two years data of the examination results was collected and analyzed statistically by applying t-test. The study proved significantly that there is great contribution of father presence in the higher achievements in academics of children. The data verify the effects of father absence on academic performance on children. The data shows a difference of 75% and 32% of intact father and absence in the academic achievements. The research also proves that female children are more affected than male children due to father absence and gain more academic achievements due to father involvement. The results show that the children from intact families show better academic performance than children from died father families. As by comparing children from intact father families and died father families ( $t = 1.4$ ,  $p = 0.01 < 0.05$ ,  $df = 28$ ,  $SD=94$ ).

Hypothesis 2 state that children from intact families do not have different academic performance as divorcee's children. The statistical analyses found that hypothesis is rejected, which conclude that divorcee's children have lower academic performance than intact father children ( $p = 0.10 > 0.05$ ,  $df = 28$ ,  $M = 74$ ,  $SD = 61.45$ ,  $t = 2.006$ ).

Hypothesis 3 state that died father children and divorcee's children have the same academic performance. The analysis of the hypothesis found that children from died father families

and divorcee's children do not have different academic performance ( $p = 0.01 > 0.05$ ,  $df = 28$ ,  $CR=1.4$ ).

## Discussion

Above result show that that there is great contribution of father involvement in the academic achievement of children and the absence of father cause a severe decrease in academic performance. The study proved that fathers play a very significant role in all aspects of academic achievements of his child, father provides environment, maintain school environment and street environment and home environment which plays a very significant role in achievement motivation which leads to academic achievements. This result confirms past study that found father involvement is positively correlated with children's overall subjective wellbeing (Fomby, & Cherlin, 2007), less psychological distress (Flouri, 2005) and less depression (Formoso, Gonzales, Barrera, & Dumka, 2007). Children of involved fathers are more likely to have higher levels of better educational outcomes, higher wellbeing, and higher educational attainment (Nord, & West, 2001; Osborne, & McLanahan, 2007; Sigle-Rushton, & McLanahan, 2002; Murnane, Maynard, & Ohls, 1981). Children from absent father have higher possibility to postpone marriage and have propensity to divorced when they marriage (Coraki, 2001).

Study by Cavanagh & Huston (2006) suggest that family instability increase children's early

problem behavior. Antecol & Bedard (2007) also found that children from divorced or single parent family have higher risk behavior of promiscuity, substance use, and crime involvement. Ermisch, & Francesconi (2001) suggests that family structure that included father involvement in daily child activity could influence children's academic performance. Craigie (2008) found that children in stable single-parent and stable two-parent households have similar cognitive outcomes. However, children from disruptive family structures have increasing adverse effects on cognitive performance compared to the stable single-parent family structure.

## Conclusion

The presence of father is very important factor that influence emotional, and social maturity for children. Father has many roles for improving and educating their children by give a positive attitude, role model, and inspiring advice. When a father is absent in a family, and then children do not have a role model to be modeled. This condition might lead to several problems such as creates a behavior problem, negative attitude in home, and low performance in school.

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