

## INFLUENCE OF FATHERS ON CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The literature indicated two controversial perspectives about the father’s importance on adolescent development (Amato, 1994). First one suggested a minimal role of fathers in child development and lives, and second one suggested that father involvement contribute positively to children’s well-being and development. A growing body of research suggests that adolescents’ relationship with their fathers was related to healthier psychosocial outcomes.

**Purpose** – In the light of research evidence one can assume that fathers differential effect on parent-adolescent relationship appear to be important. There were many themes and events that relates with involved dad or father until 1970s. Nevertheless, a new understanding of fatherhood, starting in the 1970s, made a path for fundamentally new model (Palkovitz, 2002). This new understanding of fatherhood encourages fathers to be involved as part of an egalitarian relationship between husbands and wives. This new model was influenced by feminism, making the father as co-parent and central them to coequal responsibility for parenting (Pleck & Pleck, 1997). The co-parent father in the 1970s was expected not only to take on more responsibilities in the physical care of the child but also to be an equal participant with his wife in their children development. Due to these alterations in the father’s roles and the structure of family, father’s role now includes nurturing, care giving and emotional support in both direct and indirect ways rather than being economic provider of the family. By this new perspective, many researchers point out that more studies need to focus on the father and his various roles in the family and child development (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996). Research studies have

recently shown that increased father involvement influences children whereby the father may get a chance to get to know his children better and form a closer relationship with children, thus become a more effective parent. In addition, father as a role model provides more opportunities for children to observe and learn from their fathers

**Design/methodology/approach** – This is a meta analytical study that aims to discuss about the role of the father on their children in the new age. While the traditional view of parenting presumed that fathers have a peripheral role in the child development, recent studies have pointed out the important effect of the fathers on their children development and outcomes. Today, many researchers (e.g., Nord & Brimhall, 1998) argue that fathers must become actively involved in childrearing in order to ensure healthy child development. In addition, different dimensions of father involvement have been reported in the literature such as how much time fathers allocate to their children, fathers’ day-to-day supervising of their children, playing with their children, feeding their children, educating their children, and disciplining their children (Mazza, 2002; Salem, Zimmerman, & Notaro, 1998).

**Findings** – In the light of the research evidence, several characteristics of father-adolescent interaction (communication, close relations, satisfaction, spent time together, sensitivity,) are associated with desirable outcomes in adolescents’ development. Supportive father-adolescent relationship leads to closeness, intimacy, substantial communication and satisfaction as well as the adolescents’ psychologically well-being. Although increase has been made in exploring the courses of paternal involvement, several areas have received little attention, and adolescent-father relationship need much more study than has been done (Pleck, 1997).

When it is looked at the literature, three types of studies on fatherhood have been designed to explore fathers’ effects on children; correlational studies, studies of father’s absence, and studies of father involvement (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). First, many of the studies of paternal influences were designed to identify correlation between paternal and filial characteristics. The vast majority of these studies were conducted on the father’s role as a sex-role model and the impact of this sex-role model particularly on sons. In fact, the quality of father-son relationship proved to be a crucial mediating variable; if the masculine fathers’ relationship with their sons were good, the boys were indeed more masculine. Second, in addition to this correlational research, another body of literature mentions that, the rising number of children who live in families without fathers has led to considerable interest in the effect of family structure on child development. Those studies that have considered the role of father in the development of psychosocial problems have tended to study them only in terms of their absence. Lastly, in the 1980’s several researchers sought to identify the effects of increased paternal involvement on child development. It is obvious that an impressive body of literature appearing during the 1980s, advanced the way fatherhood has been conceptualized and theorized aspects of father involvement in their children’s lives. Indeed, fathers have not been the primary source of income for the family for a long time; and because of the full

or part-time employment, most mothers no longer stay at home with the children (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995).

**Research limitations/implications** – The study have some limitations that is literature review

**Practical implications** – The results of the study may ultimately allow interventions to be designed that are geared towards improving the father-child relationship.

Results of the studies showed that father involvement training was effective in terms of improving the overall family functioning of fathers. A particular strength of the training seems to be the ability to encourage fathers to apply skills in their relationship with their adolescent children. Findings of the studies might be valuable for identifying the dimensions of the parents–adolescent relationships that could be targeted in prevention and intervention programs. Furthermore, the results of this study also adequately encourage continued efforts to develop and implement similar parent education or training programs to promote both parent-children in adolescence. The outline of the effective father training program may be suggested as follows:

1. Father Involvement Training encompasses the father-child relationship by teaching parents interaction skills. The training also provides fathers an opportunity to learn and practice each of these skills through an instructional method. By Father Involvement Training, fathers and children learn effective communication skills, and fathers are encouraged to maintain a strong relationship bond with their adolescent child while allowing for increased autonomy and peer relationship.

2. The results of the studies may ultimately allow interventions to be designed that are geared towards improving the father-child relationship. Especially by understanding the way adolescents perceive their relationship with their fathers, school counselors may develop workshops or group training sessions in which adolescents and fathers participate in to learn various skills to help them improve the quality of their relationship, including components like communication skills, positive discipline, and social interaction management.

3. Furthermore, many researchers have emphasized that father involvement is essential to ensure healthy child development, cognitive and intellectual development, academic achievement, and psychological adjustment in school settings.

4. Providing father education or training, which allows fathers to come together to share and discuss different aspects of fatherhood, may be one way of fostering their feelings of identity in parenting, and helping them clarify how they feel as parents. Such education or trainings have also been found to increase fathers’ perceptions of parental competence as well as some forms of involvement in their child development.

5. Many studies link parent involvement with a range of positive student outcomes, including higher achievement, improved school attendance, increased cooperative behavior, enhanced school retention and lower dropout rates. The results of this study may also have implications for policy makers. In order to increase father involvement in school activities, teachers and school administrators need to revise their policies on parent involvement.

**Originality/Value** – Based on father involvement frameworks, co-parenting and fathers have an important role on the peer relationship and psychosocial development of adolescents that is outlined. Family and peer are two important dimensions during adolescence and fathers should be knowledgeable about the role of peers in the life of their adolescent children.

**Keywords:** Father Involvement, children and families.

**Research type:** literature review

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