The Single Parent and Its Impact on Children

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Course Details:

Due Date:

**Adjustment of children and prosocial behavior in different family settings**

In the article the Avon Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy and Childhood was used and children of around 4 years and their siblings were observed especially their adjustments as well as their prosocial behaviors (their gender was not a major issue although it did have effects). Single parent, step ones and non-step family settings were taken into consideration for this matter (Dunn, 1998). The article shows that most children in the U.K begin living with different people apart from their real parents at a very low age mostly 10 and this is a critical age where their characters are developing and changing. The adjustments greatly affect their education, health mental, emotional and social life. In addition these family settings are usually accompanied by economic or financial strains that directly have impacts on these children. Also parents from such families are likely to be depressed making it hard for them to notice their children’s problems.

In the methodology the sample included children at the age of four and their older siblings of up to about 7 years in Avon (England). In the sample of the 4 year olds 52% was boys while girls 48% and that of older ones was the same respectively (Dunn, 1998). The procedure involved the women in question completing questionnaires at different stages of their pregnancy, infancy of their children and part of their childhood as directed. Generally the questionnaires included information of their four year children, their older siblings and the relationship between the children. It also involved that of the parents and the relationship with their children as well as their general financial status.

Measures of the children’s adjustments were measured questionnaires of strength and difficulties that provides information on the child’s emotions, relationship with peers, problems of conduct, hyperactivity and general behavior. These mentioned items were rated to a scale of 3 and each had five scales. These are followed by measures of the relationship between the mother and that of the partner and also that with the children.

The mothers were given some yes or no statements to compare with their relationship with their children, their partners, and the children’s relationships amongst themselves. The statements were grouped onto either a positive or negative scale. Relationship between the siblings was also carried out where ten questions were directed to the four year old in relation to the older sibling and also vice versa and each item rated on a three scale. The questions included information about how they played, their fights, if they missed each other and their admiration for the other (Dunn, 1998).

Family types were classified depending on the biological relationship between the parents and the children and also the step families. According to this article the non-step are the ones where both parents are biological, step family had at least a child with the mother being biological while the partner not biologically related. Other cases could have a child with the father being biological parent while single parent ones are those of a biological mother and the children.

Characteristics of the mother were also studied and they included their age, education level, number of previous marriages, their marital status, symptoms of depression, events in their lives and their social lives. In addition the type of housing of the family was also considered even with the facts about the ownership status of that house. The income of the family per week especially for the four years since the child was born on a five scale of between 100 and 400 dollars and also the ability of the family to afford needs. A statistical approach of the mean and individual differences was determined by use of correlations.

The results (ANOVA) which were mostly recorded in table form were as follows: there were big differences between children growing in families that are not step and those of step or single parent. These differences were in activity, peer relationships and the prosocial behaviors generally (Dunn, 1998). In prosocial behaviors, the older siblings in non step families had better results. Tukey-HSD tests were used in determining importance of differences in different family types. Another examination was on the importance of effects of mean differences between the different family types. The difference in mean of two groups was divided by a standard deviation of the results.

The negativity measures of the mother children and the partner were then examined and compared. Differences in mother’s negativity in the 4 year olds were negligible in the different family types, however higher in older children in step and single parent families. Step families partners similarly had higher levels of partner negativity especially on the older children. The types of families determined the negativity in the sibling negativity in that older siblings had a negative attitude towards the younger especially in the step families. Analysis was also done on the contribution of the combination of effects from the type of the family, the negativity of the mother and other effects which could be social variables.

Parallel regression type of analysis was conducted also on the scores of the prosocial behavior of both the 4 year olds and their older siblings. This showed results that negativity and age of the mother as well as gender determined the four year old prosocial behaviors a lot. The type of family according to this analysis no longer influenced the prosocial behavior of the older children. An analysis on the effect of cohabitation of the mother and partner on the adjustments and behavior of the children (from both age groups) was also carried out and no important changes were recorded from these. The limitation of the study was noted which that one side of the situation is being considered as seen where the mothers provided nearly all the information which could be error nous.

**Effects of Single Parent Families on Education and Earnings**

This article deals with male children who come from single parent families and mainly on effects of education and earnings on these young men. Here models that represent the education attained the earnings of the family are analyzed by ordinary least squares. The article shows that this type of family has effects (negative effects) on the education of these young men but not necessarily on the earnings through educational levels.

The extent of the effects depends on the period which the child lives in the single parent family and the age which he is when he lives with the family also. This article also concentrates on the families in which the single parent is female (Krein, 1986). A model which is theoretical deals with study of the household production of those involved. There are inputs by the mother to the family which could include time and earnings although they may be less in comparison to when the two parents are available. These mothers spent less time with the family because they have to work more and also no support from partners.

There are different hypotheses but currently it has been observed that those who have ever lived in a single parent family have been affected in their studies in one way or another. When there’s a continuous reduction in the source of resources then the negative effect is even much severe (Mincer, 1974).

Data analysis of these hypotheses is carried out by two types of regression models whereby the background and achievements on education is carried out and also on the earnings. In the first model the number of years spent in school is considered and are thought to be important in determining the available resources in the household. The earnings on the other hand showed the training that one had after school, their experience as a professional and determined the presence or absence of that person in the family. There is specific analysis on the period on which the person spends in a single parent family, the age and the level of education which the person was when this happened (Krein, 1986).

In the methodology, the sample used consists of mature female and young men thus difference in age as well as gender, race was also considered as blacks were high in number. There was construction of a mother and son sample and the information about the dates of birth of these young men was provided to be used in determination of the ages in which they lived in these families.

The history about the mother’s status of marriage was also found out from the mother. The time spend in the family of a single parent was determined by knowing the exact dates of death or divorce of the mothers from the partners to exactly when they got married again or just got married for those who gave birth outside wedlock. The blacks led in number by having most of the young men having at least spent time in a single parent family. These young men also had more siblings and had spent less time in school compared to those from families with two parents.

The results in this article are categorized into two where the effects on education are shown as well as on the earnings. The results are tabulated in that; the possibility of the young men to ever have lived in a single parent family is tabulated as all the other results in this study. The number of years and the general period in the family are also tabulated and the same is done for the educational attainment for these young men in comparison to those from two parent families (Krein, 1986). Here this result showed that this attainment was more than half a year less thus it was negative. The results also showed a fact that the more the time spent in the family of a single parent the higher the chances of reducing achievements in education which is the same as the hypotheses theories.

The age at which the young men were in the families also mattered a lot especially at the age when they were in pre-school; the type of family seemed not to have affected negatively those at higher levels (Mincer, 1974). The attainment of education is also affected by the number of siblings and the work of the mother and these similarly may have a negative impact. The effect of the mother’s education plays also a major role in the education of the son and his final achievement since most time is spend with the mother according to this article. The results also show that if the fathers’ educational results are lower then there’s a discouragement to the son hence even poor results from him and lower levels of education.

The earning effect on the son is through resources available for the young man as he grows up. The schooling can be affected by resources available for better schools, requirements from the school and the possibility of going to higher institutions and after school trainings. The earning of these young men can also be affected by their race especially for the blacks, their experience and qualifications. It can thus be concluded that the type of family in this case the family of a single parent has effects on the earnings of the young me but they are not as significant as those on educational attainment (Krein, 1986).

This study has a limitation in that the research done was only on a certain marginalized group which is quite grown. The gender could have given different results if a different one was used and this also applies to the case of the family type whereby only the mother is considered.

**How Children of Single Parent Families Fare as Young Adults**

The article deals with young people’s lifestyles: their education, jobs, and marriages. These are then compared to the fact whether they come from single parent or two parent family. The information collected is from nineteen to thirty four year olds because in between these ages several adjustments take place in the lives of these young people, ranging from personal to professional (Mueller, 1986). Apart from the above items, the stability of their marriages is also observed and the way they form their families is considered important in this study.

It is realized that single parent families put nearly all these factors at a disadvantage and a poor general future for the children in comparison to the two parent background. The period studied here is transitional where the individuals begin the adulthood and be settled and comfortable with the changes that take place. The transition in women is quite different and rather difficult than for the men due to the expectations of the society for a woman. During the study it was also estimated that about one infant at that time was likely to stay in a single parent family before they were eighteen.

The method used for study was first a study of the young adults from a county that is metropolitan that has a city and its surroundings as well (Mueller, 1986). The survey of these young people involved knowledge of their needs, how they were living and about their future plans. There were specific topics covered during the interview which included marital status, their families, financial status, health problems, background on their education and even type of housing. The sample used was of about 1% of the total population of that county and they were chosen by age, that is, between 19 and 34 years of age. In the families where more than one individual was of this age, only one was picked to participate and these families had been picked randomly also.

From these young adults interviewed there were different groups that emerged where there were those whose backgrounds were of two parent families and others from one parent families (Mueller, 1986). These groups were classified depending on the type of family the person spend most of the time with while growing up especially between 6 years and 16 years of age. Other groups emerged in the single parent families where majorities stayed with the mother while the minority with the father.

Also in this group most lived with the single parent because they had divorced while the others the other parent had passed. Another comparison study was done in that, individuals from stable family background whose economic status was similar to those with a single parent family background. It was discovered that these were affected by the occupation of the father while they were still in the family as they were growing up. This gave another group from the two parent families where there was a two parent family that was economically disadvantaged. There then were comparisons which were demographic that compared all these types of groupings. Gender and age differences were found not to be all that significant in this study as their effect was little. Race was however found significant after it was realized that in the single parent bracket the non-Caucasians were high in number than the others (Mueller, 1986).

Results of the study were also grouped and tabulated, educational attainment came first and it was compared for individuals from single parent, two parents and economically disadvantaged two parent families. Those from single parent families had mostly not attained high school certifications and the ones from economically low families were maybe only one or two years better off. The stable families had achieved much higher in their education although when economic differences were standardized most of the changes were avoided. A conclusion was therefore reached that the poor education attainment was probably due to the poor economy in the disadvantaged families.

Other types of results were on the time spent by the individuals while unemployed and it was also realized that those from single parent family had more time (Mueller, 1986). This was not however the case when the economic factors were put under control. The results here were also affected by the educational background of these individuals and as observed earlier very disadvantageous for the single and economically lower two parent families. In an analysis of covariance of multiple classification, effects of education when changed then the time spend unemployed is reduced even to non-significant in the latter two groups.

The status of the occupations gave similar results where the latter two groups had lowest status in the occupations as well. This was reflected in the income of these employees which was low as compared with individuals with individuals with a background of two parents, good education and a high professional status. Marriages and marital status was also different in these groups in that, the young adults from disadvantaged groups were either divorced, never married or had children out of wedlock.

**The Well-Being of Adolescents in Cohabiting, Single-Parent or Married Families**

The lifestyle of adolescents in cohabiting parents which usually are step-parents is worse than those in normal biological families (Manning, 2003). The problem is even worse for these teens than those in step families but where the families are married according to this article. In this article it is also realized that the teens in single parent especially for the mother are likely to experience the same problems as that of the one from cohabiting families and this may be due to relationships of the mother.

The marital status usually brings out the how available care is for the teenager which is important. The behavior of a child fully depends on the parenting type and availability of this parenting which is in most cases not enough in single parent families and end up affecting the children when they are teenagers (Bearman, 1997). Cohabiting usually makes it even harder for the teenager to get used to the new family members and these partners may not even have responsibilities over these teenagers spoiling them further.

Research has also shown that in fact the effects of these cohabitating partners on their partner’s children is very negative and brings out a resemblance to a step family. As the earlier article indicated, the income of the mother significantly affects the well being of the teenager regardless of whether the family type is single parent or cohabitating one (Manning, 2003). The stability of the family contributes a lot to the behavior of the child and after he/she has grown into a teenager, a reason why the married parents provide the better background for the adolescent than the other two types of families.

In the method of study the used samples were collected in the year 1995 and included teenagers in their 7th up to the 12th grades as well as their parents (Bearman, 1997). The samples were also gotten from different high schools and middle schools as well. The interviews were conducted by the Add Health and assumed to represent the whole of the United States. The first study was if cohabitation had effects on the general well being of the adolescents and mostly its negative impacts on the teens.

The next study was on comparison of these families of cohabitation to those single parent and married families and also their effects on the teenager’s behaviors. Studies on single parent family but the father being the single parent are also done and reported in this article as well. There are various variables that are used to determine the different or rather bad behaviors from the teens and a major one is the constant suspensions from a school and eventually expulsions from different schools (Bearman, 1997).

Another measure is difficulties in the improvement of school work and thus continuous failure in the work. This measure can also be due to the current status in the family and not necessarily the childhood type of family. The measure includes the respondent’s ability to concentrate in class, have respect for the teachers, being able to take homework seriously and to not have problems with the others. Other factors considered in the study are incidences of drug abuse, theft, serious but unnecessary or group fights and lying to parents.

The results are then shown on scale of three where 3 is a very serious case of the item mentioned while zero shows almost negligible problem (Bearman, 1997). The achievements in the academics are also recorded and improvements and declines noted. The scores of Ds and Fs are given scale and 1 is given to those with very few maybe one or two Ds or Fs. Some variables that are independent are studied and they include the structure of the family whether cohabiting, single or married family. Race and the type of ethnicity was also a major issue that was studied and a majority of white teenagers were studied but also Blacks and Latinos.

According to the results which were tabulated most teens are just usually expelled or rather suspended from schools regardless of their backgrounds or the factors stated above (Manning, 2003). The number of the adolescents from single parent and cohabitation families is however higher than of adolescents in married biological parents meaning that the type of family is a major issue in the behavior of these adolescents. A design was available in the study for better probability of the results.

**(Qualitative research)**

**Influence in Children from Single-Parent Homes Headed By a Female: Consumer research**

This research was done in the USA on single-parent families that are headed by a female. According to this article the USA bureau of census a single-parent female-headed family can be described as one that has a woman who is the sole care giver to the family and is not living with her spouse that she is married to.

It concurs that most of this single parents experience a lot of influence from their children in decision making in the family consumption activities (Abuja, 1993). Most of these parents tend to divide the household activities between themselves and their children and as a result the children end up having a more mature behavior than the age mates in the dual-parent families.

This research tries to open up the theoretical insights that may be used to look into the implications that a child may have in decision making process in a single-parent family that is headed by a female. This was done by carrying out preliminary interviews in families that are single-parent and are headed by a female which generated research questions which are further looked into using the data driven comparative methodology. Here the method used explores information from different sources hence exploratory. It is a qualitative one and depends on how situations are and their meanings also. The questions are asked with depth so that nothing is hidden at all and usually it does not matter who was interviewed.

The framework of the research shows there were four classes or stages in the making of decisions whereby the major problem is first identified, and then a lot of information is searched about the problem. This is followed by making of a choice in the solving of the problem and finally the actual actions on the decision (Ahuja, 1993). This whole process has not been fully considered in most family problems and in the end wrong decisions are made by the family members especially the parents who make decisions for their children. It is shown in the article that single parents are usually overloaded with decisions from work as well as home and hence leave most decisions for the children to make.

Modernization and different types of cultures are some of the factors that affect decision making in today’s families. It is also brought out by further research on the topic, those male children when growing up in single parent families with the mother being the head, think their mother cannot make the right decisions. The article also has research which shows that in the single parent families tend to have more freedom than in two parent families and this is somehow threatening because of a studied reactance theory where the child does not get enough motivation from the parents.

In most cases the children often opt for a different decision from the parent usually even the complete opposite (Ahuja, 1993). An example is taken when purchasing of household goods is considered, where parents assume to know much more about the consuming as well as the budget which is quite true. Most children don’t agree with their parents in most cases and even so parents have power in the household hence they make decisions about the purchasing.

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