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TEENAGE GIRLS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY ROLES AND FATHERHOOD STATUS

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Abstract

This article explores the perceptions of teenage girls regarding family roles and the social status of fatherhood. The research highlights how adolescent girls interpret traditional and modern expectations of family roles, including maternal and paternal responsibilities. It examines how cultural norms, media influences, and family dynamics shape their understanding of male and female roles at home. Through a review of existing literature and qualitative analysis, the study identifies key themes such as gender role internalization, the significance of fatherly presence, and the evolving perceptions of parenting responsibilities. Findings reveal that teenage girls value emotional support, shared responsibilities, and respect in family roles, and that positive father involvement correlates with healthier social development. This work contributes to the broader understanding of gender socialization in contemporary families.

Keywords:Teenage girls, Family roles ,Fatherhood status ,Gender perceptions, Socialization, Parental involvement

Introduction

The structure and interpretation of family roles are pivotal for the social development of adolescents. Family constitutes the primary social environment in which gender norms and societal expectations are first learned. Among these, fatherhood holds a distinct status as fathers are traditionally seen as providers, protectors, and authority figures. However, contemporary shifts in gender roles have challenged these traditional norms, leading to a diversification of how young individuals, particularly teenage girls, perceive fatherhood and family responsibilities.

Teenage years represent a critical period for identity formation, value development, and social cognition. During this time, girls reflect on the roles of significant adults and begin to form expectations about future family life. Their perception of family roles and fatherhood can affect their relationships, career aspirations, and future parenting ideals. Exploring teenage girls' viewpoints provides insights into the changing dynamics of family life and the evolving understanding of gender responsibilities.

This article aims to synthesize existing research on this topic, analyze patterns, and discuss implications for families and educational frameworks.

Literature Review

Researchers argue that gender socialization begins early in childhood, where societal norms reinforce specific behaviors for males and females (Bem, 1981). Girls are often socialized to

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value nurturing roles, cooperation, and emotional expressiveness, whereas boys are encouraged to exhibit independence and authority (Eagly, 1987). Such distinctions shape how adolescents perceive family roles and responsibilities.

Fatherhood has traditionally been linked with financial provision and discipline (Pleck, 2010). However, contemporary research highlights a shift toward emotional involvement and co-parenting (Lamb, 2014). Teenage girls' perceptions reflect this shift, as they increasingly associate fatherhood with active engagement, emotional support, and shared caregiving.

Media portrayals significantly influence adolescents' gender expectations. Television and social media often depict diverse family structures, challenging the stereotypical father figure (Gill, 2007). Cultural context also determines normative expectations around family roles; collectivistic cultures may emphasize extended family involvement, whereas individualistic societies promote autonomy and equality.Studies find that positive father involvement is linked with better psychological adjustment, academic performance, and social competence in both boys and girls (Marsiglio et al., 2000). For teenage girls, a supportive father figure is often tied to higher self-esteem and healthier relationship expectations.

Discussion

Adolescent girls' perceptions of family roles demonstrate a blend of traditional and modern ideals. Many girls express respect for fathers as authority figures but simultaneously value emotional closeness and mutual support within the family. This duality reflects broader societal trends where gender roles are evolving but not completely redefined.

Some respondents view fatherhood through a traditional lens—associating it with protection and decision-making authority. Others value emotional presence and active caregiving. These contrasting views suggest that while cultural norms persist, exposure to egalitarian family models influences younger generations.

Teenage girls who report positive interactions with their fathers often express stronger support for involved paternal roles. Conversely, those from families with absent or disengaged fathers may reflect more critical attitudes toward traditional fatherhood. This shows how personal experience shapes perceptions.

The findings imply that schools and community programs should address gender role expectations and promote equitable responsibilities within families. Encouraging dialogue about shared roles can reduce stereotypes and support healthier family dynamics.

Results

The key findings of this study include:

-Evolving Perceptions: Teenage girls combine traditional and modern concepts of family roles, valuing both authority and emotional support in fatherhood.

-Importance of Emotional Involvement: Emotional engagement and communication are critical factors in positive perceptions of fatherhood.

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-Role of Social Context: Cultural background, media, and personal experiences significantly influence girls' views on family dynamics.

-Preference for Equality: Many respondents favor shared responsibilities between mothers and fathers, indicating a shift toward gender egalitarianism in domestic roles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teenage girls today perceive family roles and fatherhood not merely through conventional stereotypes but through more nuanced and equitable frameworks. While traditional expectations still persist in some contexts, there is a clear trend toward valuing emotional support, shared responsibilities, and respectful partnerships within families. Schools, parents, and policymakers must recognize these evolving perceptions to foster supportive environments that encourage balanced family roles. Strengthening father involvement and promoting gender equity can contribute to healthier adolescent development and societal progress.

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