



Woman in Development and Politics

Puberty Experience among Daughters of Single Fathers; Qualitative Study in Yazd

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Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received: 24 May 2023

Received in revised form: 1 August 2023

Accepted: 29 August 2023

Published online: 20 March 2024

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Puberty is a socially constructed, biologically complex, and complex phenomenon that females experience uniquely. The quality of transition during puberty has a significant impact on the future of girls. The easier and carefree this happens with acceptance, the less likely negative consequences will be in the future. In the current situation, the media, peer group, school and family play a significant role in how girls go through puberty. Since the life in the family still constitutes the majority of the girl's life time, the approach of parents and others in the family is closely related to the quality of puberty experience in girls. Daughters who grow up with single fathers may undergo a distinct puberty experience. The quality of the father's and other family members' interactions with the daughter during her puberty may be associated with this issue. When their mothers are absent, the daughters of single fathers face a variety of difficulties. They lack both an understanding of and a pattern of female puberty that would facilitate a smooth transition. The main question of the current research is to explore the experience of puberty among daughters who have single fathers. The main objective of this study also encompassed an examination of the difficulties encountered by the females of these groups in terms of health behaviors during menstruation, their understanding of puberty, and their experience about the subject.

Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted in Yazd between 2022 and 2023. The city of Yazd is a traditional society with tremendous social changes. The new generation in this city, along with social changes, experience new expectations and demands along with changes in attitude and behavior. The field of study was girls who lived with their fathers and were willing to participate. The participants are 10 Yazd-born females between the ages of 13 and 16 who have lived with their fathers for over six months. Purposeful sampling was implemented within educational institutions. The participants willingly assisted us, and to ensure a comprehensive representation of the population, samples were drawn from various educational institutions. In-class interviews with a semi-structured format were utilized to gather data. Conducting data analysis using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis was employed to discern recurring patterns and recurring themes within the qualitative data. The ethical criteria of research and the validity of qualitative research were emphasized by the researchers during the research process.

Results

The themes investigated in the research showed that puberty and its manifestation among daughters in the custody of their fathers is a patriarchal phenomenon that is influenced by the father's conduct. The father's role in the quality of puberty experience was very important. In fact, although puberty was a girl's experience, the presence and role of the father determined the quality of the girl's life, as well as her attitude and behavior on the matter. The experience of puberty is closely related to the father's behavior. This means that the father's attitude and behaviors in this domain may provide the participants with unique experiences. Supportive fathers who make an effort to comprehend and embrace the issue accurately significantly assist their daughters in coming to terms with it during their youth. Unlike those fathers who are indifferent to the issue and neglect it, he has turned puberty into a problematic phenomenon in which the girl experiences a sense of shame and secrecy, and in some cases, a decrease in self-confidence and disgust from this natural phenomenon. The three themes which explored are: supportive father, neglectful father and problematic puberty. In fact, in the group under study, on the one hand, we were faced with a supportive father who facilitated the conditions of puberty for the girl and improved her psychological and

Keywords:

fatherhood,
single-parent family,
shame,
menstrual habit,
maturity issues.

biological quality. This group of girls considered puberty as a natural and positive experience and did not feel uncomfortable about it. While the other group were those whose father neglected the girl's maturity. Intentionally or unintentionally, he was not paying attention to it. Puberty in this group became a problematic phenomenon. They felt ashamed of puberty changes, especially in the matter of menstruation. This caused a negative experience of puberty in the girl. She could not share her needs with her father, even about the needs of sanitary equipment during menstruation. The experience of puberty was a bitter and difficult experience for these neglected girls. They had a kind of feminine denial and felt bad about the changes in their femininity. A consequence that seemed to accompany them in the rest of their lives.

Conclusion

The result of the research shows that in divorced or single-parent families, daughters are vulnerable groups that should be given more serious attention in the issue of puberty. The experience of puberty among girls with fathers' custody is more related to the father's point of view and the role of fatherhood. This demonstrates that in these cases puberty is more social than biological. It means that the maturity of the studied girls, although it is a biological thing, but it is experienced socially and mainly in the quality of the father's encounter with the subject. In fact, the onset of puberty in a female is a paternal, social, and masculine phenomenon that is influenced by cultural and social values. Therefore, in a deep explanation, girls' puberty is considered a cultural matter, and the approach of a society's culture towards it can affect the quality of the subject's experience in girls. The issue of menstruation and puberty becomes more problematic in families without the mother and in societies where these topics are forbidden. This is due to a lack of understanding regarding the body's natural mechanisms, necessary care during menstruation, etc. It is suggested that, in light of the rise in single-parent households, particularly among fathers, efforts be made to promote education in schools regarding menstruation and puberty, publish educational booklets for both fathers and daughters concerning menstruation, and foster an environment that encourages candid and honest communication between fathers and daughters. Counselors, social workers and school health officials have an important responsibility in this field. They should identify the vulnerable groups in the subject of this study and talk about their family problems in the puberty experience and try to solve it.

Cite this article: Kalateh Sadati, A., Adelhah, F., & Shamsaddin Qotrom, F. (2024). Puberty Experience among Daughters of Single Fathers; Qualitative Study in Yazd. *Women in Development and Politics*, 22(1), 115-142. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2023.359676.1008343>



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Publisher: The University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2023.359676.1008343>
