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An Overview of Partner Choice for Early Adult Women who Experience Fatherlessness in Orphanages

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Abstract

Everyone is constantly developing, starting from infancy, adolescence, and adulthood. As we enter the early adult stage, one of our developmental responsibilities is to begin a new role as a partner, which involves choosing a partner. The choice of a partner is generally associated with a father figure who will be a role model in choosing a partner. Every daughter needs a father figure, but not all girls can experience this due to the physical and psychological absence of a father, a condition known as fatherlessness. This study aims to describe the partner selection process among early adult women who have experienced fatherlessness in orphanages. Respondents in this study were early adult women aged 18–25 who already had a partner. The study employed a qualitative research method, incorporating a phenomenological approach. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews. Respondents in this study totaled two people. The data analysis results indicate that while both respondents have different focuses and approaches when choosing a partner, they share a common view regarding the importance of core values and emotional support in a healthy relationship.

Keywords: Mate Selection, Fatherless, Early Adulthood

INTRODUCTION

The selection of a life partner is a critical factor in personal growth, particularly for women transitioning into early adulthood. In this phase, individuals tackle personal obligations while also contemplating their duties in the wider social context, including romantic relationships (East et al., 2020). For women, childhood experiences and connections with parental figures, particularly

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dads, significantly affect their preferences and criteria for selecting a spouse. Individuals frequently utilize paternal figures as benchmarks for establishing connections with the opposite sex, since they typically embody stability, security, and emotional support (Su et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the fact is that not all women have access to a paternal figure in their life. Numerous women experience fatherlessness during their upbringing, whether due to physical absence (e.g., divorce, death, or other familial circumstances) or psychological absence (i.e., the father is physically present but uninvolved in the emotional and psychological development of the child) (Tarigo et al., 2023). This state is termed fatherlessness, denoting the absence of a father's presence and impact in a child's psychological development. The topic of fatherlessness is gaining prominence in developmental psychology research, since the lack of a paternal figure is thought to influence character development, identity, and interpersonal interactions, including partner choices (Ketchen & Shook, 2021).

Nonetheless, the fact is that not all women have access to a paternal figure in their life. Numerous women experience fatherlessness during their upbringing, whether due to physical absence (e.g., divorce, death, or other familial circumstances) or psychological absence (i.e., the father is physically present but uninvolved in the child's emotional and psychological development) (Reuven-Krispin et al., 2021). This situation is termed fatherlessness, referring to the absence of a father's presence and impact in a child's psychological development. The lack of a father figure is increasingly emphasized in developmental psychology research, since it is thought to influence character development, identity, and interpersonal interactions, including partner choices (Ramatsetse & Ross, 2023).

This situation is further complicated in orphanage settings, where numerous girls have not only lost a paternal figure but have also been raised in an atmosphere devoid of nuclear family support. Children in orphanages may encounter many psychological difficulties, such as feelings of inadequacy, diminished self-esteem, and a necessity for emotional support. These situations can profoundly influence their relationship-building in maturity, particularly with partner selection. Young adult women residing in orphanages and experiencing fatherlessness may possess a distinct viewpoint on romantic relationships compared to those raised with a father or another familial figure.

Prior study indicates that women who experience fatherlessness often want a spouse to fulfill the paternal role, especially in providing emotional support and stability. Nonetheless, each person possesses an own method of managing the effects of fatherlessness. Certain women may

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be more susceptible to dysfunctional relationships due to an excessive dependence on their spouses to address their emotional deficiencies. Conversely, other women may cultivate greater independence and establish elevated criteria for selecting a mate to guarantee a good and secure partnership.

Young adult women who endure paternal absence in orphanages may encounter more difficulties in establishing romantic relationships. Alongside the loss of a paternal figure, they have matured in a less emotionally nurturing environment, leading to an increased demand for emotional support from a spouse. It is essential to recognize that each person reacts uniquely to the experience of growing up without a father. Some perceive loss as a hindrance, but others regard it as a chance for personal development and increased independence.

This study seeks to elucidate the mate choosing process among early adult women who have experienced fatherlessness in orphanages. This study use qualitative methodologies and a phenomenological approach to investigate how early adult women raised without a father make judgments on life partner selection. This research examines perceptions of romantic relationships, the values deemed significant in a partner, and the influence of fatherlessness on desires for cultivating healthy relationships.

This research aims to elucidate the impact of fatherlessness on the mate choosing process among early adult women, specifically within an orphanage context. This research is expected to advance developmental psychology by highlighting the need of emotional support and stability in romantic relationships, especially for women experiencing fatherlessness. Moreover, we expect that the results of this study will provide significant insights for practitioners supporting children in orphanages, with the objective of promoting better and more stable adult relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fatherless

Fatherlessness occurs when the father is physiologically present yet psychologically absent in the child's mind (McLanahan et al., 2022). The father's position is confined to two principal responsibilities: providing financial support and granting his blessing upon marriage. Children are unable to adequately replicate father figures owing to the absence of their capacity to impart or cultivate positive ideals. A person is said to lack paternal attachment if he is without a father or has no relationship with his father owing to divorce or parental discord. The father's bodily presence ceases with death, resulting in the existence of orphans (Culpin et al., 2022).

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Fatherlessness denotes the lack of a paternal presence and influence in a child's life. This occurs among orphans and youngsters lacking a close relationship with their father in daily life. Fatherlessness denotes the absence of a paternal figure in life and parenting, along with insufficient communication between the father and the kid (Symonds et al., 2022). This transpires as a result of divorce or death. Fatherlessness is characterized by the lack of a paternal presence and influence in a child's life (Rawlings, 2022). This occurs among orphans or children who lack a close bond with their father in their everyday life. Fatherlessness refers to the absence of a father or the absence of a relationship with one's father due to divorce, death, economic circumstances, or domestic abuse (Jilani et al., 2022).

Early Adulthood

Early adulthood is a transitional phase from adolescence, resulting in developmental traits that are not markedly distinct from those of adolescence (Palm, 2021). The attributes of early adulthood are delineated below: Early adulthood is a reproductive phase characterized by the establishment of families, especially among women under 30. This anxiety typically correlates with your ability to adapt to the issue at hand, or your success or failure in resolving it. Early adulthood frequently entails a phase of dependency and a transformation in values, which may be shown via reliance on parents, educational institutions, or government assistance in obtaining loans for college financing. In contrast, the phase of value transformation in early adulthood arises from the aspiration to integrate into adult social and economic groupings (Brown et al., 2022).

Early adulthood necessitates the adaptation to new responsibilities such as spouse, parent, and provider (Ellis et al., 2023). To meet their new obligations, individuals must also develop new attitudes and values. According to (Buchanan, 2023), early adulthood is a shift from diminished reproductive capacity to various social, physical, intellectual, and psychological functions. Early adulthood represents a transitional phase from youth to adulthood, encompassing the shift from reliance to financial autonomy, self-determination, and a more pragmatic outlook on the future.

Mate Selection

Individuals undergo a screening procedure to choose their life partner, dismissing those who fail to fit their criteria, until they eventually choose the most suited candidate (Lowery et al., 2023). Mate selection is the process by which an individual finds a mate who can offer significance till marriage (Quadlin et al., 2022). According to developmental process theory, mThe

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developmental process hypothesis posits that mate selection entails the screening and sorting of individuals until a single eligible and appropriate candidate is identified. The resemblance of some qualities and components possessed by each partner (Rawlings, 2022).

Selecting a life partner entails identifying a buddy or companion and thereafter picking an individual to accompany one during the aging process [18]. Every individual must make significant choices regarding their future companion. One method to do this is to ready oneself to seek and select an individual of the opposing sex as a lifelong companion. Parents significantly influence the selection of a life mate by offering first counsel (Hoskin & Serafini, 2023). Parents have a crucial role in providing guidance during the selection of an appropriate life mate, especially for daughters. Parents serve as essential educators, imparting the distinctive values of their family lifestyle to their children during their development (Holzer et al., 2021). The selection of a life mate involves individuals seeking companionship based on several characteristics, including social position, economic standing, educational background, race, and religion. Individuals have selected the criteria they desire in a life mate (Ho, 2020).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative methodology. This research aims to comprehend the circumstances of a context by a comprehensive and meticulous description grounded in a natural setting pertinent to the real situations occurring in the field. In qualitative research, the terms population and sample are synonymous with research subject or unit of analysis. The demographic and sample consist of early adult women aged 18 to 25 years who are currently in a relationship. Methods of data collecting employing semi-structured interviews. The research had two respondents. Ultimately, qualitative data analysis is inductive, signifying that an analysis derived from the collected data subsequently evolves into a hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research results

This study discovered that early adult women who suffered fatherlessness, both physically and psychologically, possess distinct viewpoints when selecting a life mate. The findings, derived from the two participants, indicated:

1. The initial respondent underscores the significance of stability and security in interpersonal interactions. She seeks a companion capable of satisfying the emotional

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requirements unmet by her paternal figure. Her primary emphasis is on a partner who offers robust emotional support, aligns with her basic beliefs, and exhibits psychological stability.

2. The second responder emphasized transparency and integrity in the partnership. Despite her experience of growing up without a father, she exhibited a desire for a partner capable of engaging in candid talks and demonstrating reliability. This answer emphasized the partner's capacity for collaboration in overcoming problems, highlighting the significance of teamwork in partnerships.

DISCUSSION

This study offers compelling insights into how early adult women who experienced fatherlessness in foster care approach the partner choosing process. The findings suggest that fatherlessness affects emotional demands in romantic relationships, however the impact differs based on individual experiences.

1. Father's Role as Central Figure

   Developmental theories indicate that dads are crucial in the establishment of girls' emotional identities. Adults generally view dads as sources of stability, protection, and emotional support, which they invoke in their love relationships. The lack of a paternal figure, whether in a physical or emotional capacity, can generate a hole that individuals may attempt to fill with a romantic relationship. In this study, both respondents expressed a want for an authoritative figure, such as a father, although their approaches to seeking a relationship differed. One participant preferred a spouse who could offer stability, whilst the other valued openness and collaboration (Greitemeyer, 2023).

2. Emotional Support Seeking

   The respondents in this study, whether consciously or subconsciously, demonstrated significant worry for the emotional support provided by their spouses. They recognized that their experiences of growing up without a father shaped their perceptions on romantic relationships. Emotional support emerged as the primary expectation from their spouses, supplanting the function of an absent paternal figure in their lives. This conclusion aligns with other studies indicating that persons raised without a father frequently exhibit more dependence on partners to satisfy their emotional needs (Sinai & Peleg, 2021).

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3. Independence in Mate Selection

   Notably, although both respondents acknowledged the influence of fatherlessness, they did not exclusively attribute their relationship selection to his absence. This indicates emotional autonomy and the capacity to establish connections grounded in individual choices and values deemed significant. The experience of being fatherless was significant; nonetheless, respondents could distinguish their childhood demands from their adult relational requirements. In this instance, attributes such as honesty, transparency, and cooperative capability were significant factors taken into account (Ketchen & Shook, 2021).

4. Healthy and Quality Relationships

   The study's findings indicate that both respondents had a profound comprehension of healthy and excellent relationships. They recognized the significance of sustaining effective communication and providing mutual support inside the partnership. Both respondents regard stability and emotional openness as significant factors. Despite the psychological pressures associated with a fatherless childhood, the respondents successfully developed a positive conceptualization of relationships, emphasizing mutual progress and understanding (Symonds et al., 2022).

5. Influence of Social Background

   Life in an orphanage also affects the manner in which people select their relationships. They want not simply a figure to assume their father's job but also a companion capable of comprehending the emotional intricacies they encounter. Individuals raised in an atmosphere devoid of nuclear family support often favor solid relationships that offer a sense of security and comfort (Su et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The research and study of the partner selection process among early adult women who have experienced fatherlessness in orphanages have concluded that this process yields a specific description of partner selection. The partner selection procedure comprises six separate stages.

1. Each respondent possesses distinct criteria and areas of emphasis. The initial response seeks to evade previous errors by identifying distinct attributes in a paternal figure. The second respondent exhibits discernment and diligence in selecting a mate.

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2. Both respondents underscore the significance of closeness while being amenable to long-distance interactions.
3. Both respondents have a similar perspective on a partner's attractiveness, evaluating it primarily on personality and physical attributes, with the latter being a secondary consideration.
4. Both respondents exhibit a propensity to select mates from backgrounds distinct from their own.
5. Both respondents exhibited parallels in their partner selection process, as they both placed significant importance on meaningful dialogue and the emotional support derived from such interactions. Both respondents advocated for transparent and candid communication.
6. Both respondents exhibit commonalities in this process; specifically, once the partner meets the established criteria, they are prepared to advance the relationship to a more serious phase, namely marriage.

Researchers may put forward the following concepts:

1. Selecting a Partner for Women Without Fathers

   Women without fathers ought to cultivate an optimistic perspective, recognizing that not all males possess negative qualities. Strive to surmount your apprehension while selecting a prospective life mate to guarantee the identification of the appropriate individual. Allow yourself the opportunity to familiarize yourself with new individuals before to rendering a definitive judgment on a matter. Additionally, allow yourself the opportunity to explore novel experiences, since love and happiness may arise from unforeseen sources. One can establish social interactions with males without first engaging emotions, so alleviating stress in the process of gaining trust. Refrain from hastily entering a relationship; take the time to gradually familiarize yourself with an individual and savor the experience. It is crucial to recognize that not all guys resemble your paternal figure who disappoints your expectations; other commendable individuals exist who may provide help.
2. Further Research

   Subsequent researchers interested in examining partner selection among early adult women experiencing fatherlessness may analyze the influence of trauma on partner selection through comprehensive interviews, investigating how such trauma shapes their

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choices and expectations in life partners.

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