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Anxiety in Father-Absent College Males

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ANXIETY IN FATHER-ABSENT COLLEGE MALES

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ANXIETY IN FATHER-ABSENT

COLLEGE MALES

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels in male college students (N=59). A questionnaire was utilized to identify father-absence and four variables associated with father-absence: type or reason for father's absence, length of absence, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate. Levels of anxiety were defined by scores on the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS). A t test comparison of the MAS means of the father-absent students and the MAS means of a father-present control group was not significant. Chi square analyses of MAS scores in the father-absence group failed to find significant differences in anxiety according to type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate. These results are discussed in comparison with other recent studies on this topic and possible explanations of discrepancies are offered.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Until recently, the influence of father-absence on the personality development of children has largely been a mute issue in the professional literature. This is perhaps understandable because the family in western industrial society has traditionally been considered matricentric. As such, the major responsibility for meeting and satisfying the physiological and psychological needs of the children has frequently been solely under the jurisdiction and direction of the mother. Consequently, the father's primary importance has been inexorably restricted to his economic contribution to the family's welfare and happiness. The father, in fact, was not even expected to assume a major role in the solialization process of the children (Gorer, 1948; Kluckhohn, 1949).

This apparent lack of recognition of the importance of the father has been saliently reflected in the paucity of scientific investigations in the professional literature concerning this topic. Peterson, Becker, Hellmer, Shoemaker, and Quay (1959), for example, reviewed American family research between 1929 and 1956 and discovered only 11 publications pertaining to the father-child relationship. Conversely, these researchers reported over 160 devoted to the mother-child relationship.

More recently, however, the increasing prevalence of fatherless families in our society has generated a substantial amount of current interest and concern regarding the character and consequences of the father's role, resulting in a rapidly expanding body of father-absence research. Several researchers, including Clausen (1966), Herzog and Sudia (1970), Pettigrew (1964), Schlesinger (1966), and Wynn (1964), have reported that over ten percent of the children in the United States, an alarming seven million, reside in fatherless families. The implications of such a staggering figure have justifiably influenced many investigators to address themselves to the issue of the father's role in the family and the concomitant effects of father-absence on the children.

The results of much of this research generally suggest two major conclusions. The first is the generalization that father-absence is associated with deleterious and debilitating effects on the children's personality development, manifested as deficits and/or abnormalities in a number of critical areas, including sex-role development, cognitive functioning, interpersonal relations, and personal adjustment (Biller, 1971). The second conclusion suggests that the validity of this first generalization is certainly greater in the case of male children (Bach, 1946; Biller, 1970; Lynn & Sawrey, 1959).

Several writers have even examined the four crucial variables of father-absence: type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate, and have suggested that

such variables differentially influence these effects. Benson (1968), Hetherington (1973), and Goode (1961), studying the differential effects of type of father-absence, have reported that father-absence due to divorce or separation may be more debilitating and harmful than father-absence resulting from death. Similarly, additional research regards the first five years, and in some cases the first two years, as critical in initiating and fostering the adverse effects of father-absence (Biller & Bahm, 1971; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Hetherington, 1966; Pedersen & Rabson, 1969; Santrock, 1970b). The availability of father surrogates has also been examined by researchers, who suggest that male surrogate models are capable of limiting or reducing some of the effects of father-absence (Nash, 1965; Santrock, 1970a, Steimel, 1960; Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, & Landy, 1968; Wohlford, Santrock, Berger, & Liberman, 1971). Finally, Biller (1971), among others, has emphasized the rather obvious differential effects of length of father-absence.

Focusing specifically within the area of personal adjustment, father-absence has frequently been associated with high anxiety levels in male children. Research suggests that paternally deprived children often experience insecurity in interpersonal relationships, which fosters feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem (Biller, 1971). This feeling of insecurity or inadequacy appears to be the cumulative effect of many factors which revolve around the role of the father as a psychological, social, and economic model.

The pervasive influence of the father as a model in all

aspects of the children's personality development is essential and critical (Biller, 1971). Supplying emotional security, companionship, masculinity, and economic stability, the father establishes and promotes an atmosphere that adequately prepares the children for life. A decisive and competent father who allows his children to be independent nurtures and facilitates their ability to cope with their environment (Rosen & D'Andrade, 1969; Van Manen, 1968). In addition, paternal self-confidence, encouragement, and involvement are important factors leading to the development of the children's problem-solving skills and ability to think flexibly (Bronfebrenner, 1961; Mussen, Young, Gaddini, & Morante, 1963).

Father-absent children are often without this solid preparation and, as a result, perceive many environmental crises as unsolvable (Biller, 1970). Moreover, feelings of being different from other children can contribute to a sense of inadequacy or inferiority. Father-absent children are also quite likely to experience various levels of economic and financial insecurity, a situation which is strikingly prevalent in lower classes families.

The purpose of the present research was to investigate this relationship between father-absence and high anxiety levels in males, while simultaneously examining the differential effects of type, length, and age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

A review of the literature has revealed that father-absence may frequently be associated with high anxiety levels in male children. A careful scrutiny of many of the studies in this literature, however, yields a number of methodological deficiencies which serve to restrict the scope of their interpretations. Perhaps the most salient of these deficiencies has been the failure to adequately specify and to subsequently examine the four critical variables of father-absence: type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate. Each of these variables has been demonstrated to differentially influence the effects of father-absence (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1971; Biller & Bahm, 1971; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Goode, 1961; Hetherington, 1966, 1973; Nash, 1965; Pedersen & Rabson, 1969; Santrock, 1970a, 1970b; Steimel, 1960; Sutton-Smith et al., 1968; Wohlford et al., 1970). Additional variables that have not always been accounted for or controlled include race, IQ, socio-economic background, sibling constellation, and birth order.

Directly pertaining to the scope of this investigation, only one study has actually empirically explored the preceise relationship between father-absence and high anxiety levels in a male college population (Leichty, 1960). Instead, much of the research has focused its attention and

efforts to studying, within child and adolescent populations, the various relationships between father-absence and sex-role identification (McCord, McCord, & Thurber, 1962; Stephens, 1961), sex-role identification and anxiety (Lazowick, 1955; Mussen, 1961; Schoeppe, Haggard, & Havighurst, 1953), and father-absence and adjustment problems (Cervantes, 1965; Layman, 1961; Lynn & Sawrey, 1959; Pedersen, 1966; Rouman, 1956; Russel, 1957; Suedfield, 1967). When the relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels was directly investigated, elementary school populations were utilized (Koch, 1961; Stolz, Dowley, Chance, Stevenson, Faust, Johnson, Faust, Engvall, Ullman, Ryder, & Gowin, 1954). There was also a lack of sufficient controls in these studies. As a result, the precise relationship between father-absence and high anxiety levels in a college population requires further clarification.

The limited research directly investigating the relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels, which utilized child populations, has generally been fraught with inadequate controls. Frequently, there has been no specification of type, length, and age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate. In addition, potentially relevant variables such as IQ, socioeconomic background, birth order, and sibling constellation have not always been explicitly considered, either in subject matching or in data analysis (Biller, 1971). One of the earliest works was a theoretical review by Freud and other psychoanalytic writers which examined personality dysfunctioning

in males and conceptualized anxiety as a primary consequence of father-absence (Fenichel, 1945). As such, anxiety was viewed as a natural and inevitable derivative of the unresolved Oedipal situation.

Koch (1961) compared two groups of non-problem pre-school male and female children, one from non-broken homes and the other from divorce-broken homes, on the basis of a projective test of anxiety and a series of parent interviews. The two groups were matched by pairing each child from the broken-home group with a child of equivalent IQ and chronological age from the complete-home group. Significantly higher anxiety test scores obtained for the broken-home group, suggesting that the pre-school, father-absent child was more likely to experience adjustment difficulties involving anxiety than one from a father-present home. In Koch's study, however, no effort was made to examine the differential effects of length and age of onset of father-absence and availability of father surrogates within a child population. Stolz et al. (1954) reported that 4- to 8-year-old children, who had been father-absent early in life due to military service but whose fathers had subsequently returned, were more anxious than children whose fathers were continually present since birth. These previously father-separated children emitted more anxiety with peers and adults, in story completion sessions where the situation involved the father, and according to mothers' reports concerning their fears. Importantly, however, the fathers were present in the homes at the time of the study and

were experiencing stressful relationships with their children.

Additional research has investigated the association between father-absence and anxiety related to sex and sex-role identification. These investigations primarily studied child and adolescent populations. Furthermore, they failed to explore any of the critical variables of father-absence: type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate. Stephens (1961), for example, reported a survey of social workers, which compared five matched pairs of families, each pair containing one mother-child and one father-mother-child family. Results indicated a higher level of anxiety regarding sex and a significant tendency toward more overt femininity among mother-child family boys. A similar study (McCord et al., 1962) analyzed social workers' direct observations of early adolescent boys during a five-year period. They found that father-absent boys exhibited significantly more anxiety about sex than did a control group of father-present boys. Both of these studies, however, employed social workers' observations as their sole assessment of anxiety, a limitation that must be considered in the interpretation of the results.

In one of the rare studies utilizing a college population, Leichty (1960) associated father-absence with anxiety concerning mother-father sexual interaction. She administered the Blacky Test to compare a father-absent group of male freshmen with a father-present group. She failed, however, to identify any relevant variables other than father-absence or father-presence. Moreover, the suitability

of the Blacky Test, which is a projective technique designed for use with children, is questionable as an assessment instrument for a college population.

Another set of investigations dealing primarily with adolescent and college populations examined the relationship between sex-role identification and anxiety (Lazowick, 1955; Mussen, 1961; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1965; Schoeppe et al., 1953). None of these studies, however, specified or explored the issue of father-absence. In his study, Mussen (1961) contrasted two groups of adolescent boys who took a vocational interest inventory during their senior year in high school. One group consisted of subjects with the most masculine interest scores, and the other of subjects with the most feminine scores. Several kinds of other data were also collected in connection with the University of California Adolescent Growth Study. In general, it was found that a high level of masculine identification among adolescent boys was associated with feelings of personal adequacy and emotional stability. Feminine interest boys, in contrast, displayed more overt manifestations of tension and restlessness and less overall adjustment. Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1965), employing measures of masculinity, femininity, anxiety, and impulsivity in college students, suggested that males with inappropriate sex-role characteristics and/or low in masculinity were highly anxious. Similarly, Lazowick's (1955) investigation of manifest-anxiety scores of 268 male college students revealed higher anxiety scores for those subjects with poor sex-role adjustment and

identification. Conversely, evidence from Schoeppe et al. (1953), based on exhaustive, interdisciplinary data from a small, select sample, suggested that chronic anxiety and poor adjustment were relatively uncommon among boys with proper sex-role identification. As indicated earlier, however, none of these studies included a measure or assessment of father-absence.

A final area of research has explored the relationship between father-absence and a variety of adjustment problems, including personal, scholastic, and occupational difficulties. The studies in this area, in addition to generally utilizing child and adolescent populations, have not focused on anxiety. One category of studies has suggested that father-absent children are more immature and have a higher incidence of behavior problems in interpersonal and scholastic adjustment within the school setting. In his investigation of the relationship between school problems and parental factors, Rouman (1956) examined approximately 400 guidance service case studies of 5- to 16-year old children and adolescents in four situations: employed mother, step-parent, lack of adult male, and control. Using personality profiles and reasons for referral, Rouman discovered that individuals without an adult male felt their greatest problem was a sense of personal worthlessness. Moreover, they were most often referred for academic failure, although, compared with the other groups, they were not lacking in intellectual capacity. Similar findings were described by Russell (1957), who compared a father-absent group of

school children with a father-present group, matched in chronological age, sex, race, and intelligence. Children from broken homes exhibited significantly more behavior problems, including lying, stealing, disobedience, enuresis, and extreme expression of anger.

Lynn and Sawrey (1959) investigated the developmental effects of father-absence on 8- to 10-year old Norwegian children. Father-absent boys and girls, when compared to a father-present control group, were more immature and less well-adjusted. Layman (1960) also found a relationship between father-absence and immaturity patterns in school age children, demonstrated by infantile hand to mouth activity.

Pedersen (1966) compared the extent of father-absence in a group of 27 emotionally disturbed 11-15 year old male military dependents with a matched group of normal, non-disturbed boys. Both groups were comparable in chronological age, birth order, maternal and paternal ages, branch of military service, active duty versus retired status, and family socioeconomic background as determined by parental educational level and military rank. Although relatively long periods of father-absence were common for both groups, it was only within the disturbed group that the extent of father-absence was related to level of emotional disturbance, as measured by the Rogers Scale of Adjustment. In addition, comparisons of parental MMPI data for both groups suggested that the mothers of the disturbed boys were themselves significantly more disturbed than the mothers of the normals.

The author felt that this indicated that adjusted, psychologically healthy mothers may be able to counteract some of the effects of paternal deprivation.

Another category of studies has examined adjustment problems which are manifested by difficulties in fulfilling long-term responsibilities. One such study (Cervantes, 1965) investigated 25 pairs of Caucasian youths from six major cities, matched according to sex, chronological age, IQ, secondary school, and general socioeconomic background. Each pair consisted of a youth who had dropped out of school and one who was successfully completing the last semester of his high school education. Employing three instruments: a questionnaire, a taped interview, and the Thematic Appreception Test, Cervantes found the typical home of the dropout to be characterized by paternal inadequacy and absence. No information was specified, nor were subsequent data collected, however, concerning any of the critical variables of father-absence: type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate.

Congruent findings were reported by Suedfield (1967) in his investigation of Peace Corps volunteers. Endeavoring to determine predictors of overseas success among applicants, data were compiled on the presence of the biological father during the volunteer's childhood. In two independent, random samples, the proportion of individuals from fatherless homes was significantly larger among unsuccessful volunteers who had returned to the United States before the scheduled completion of their tours because of conduct

and adjustment problems. Suedfield thus concluded that paternal absence during childhood significantly differentiated successful from unsuccessful volunteers. Approximating the limitations of Cervantes' study, however, Suedfield considered only the absence or presence in the home of the biological father.

Chapter 3

Statement of the Problem

Several research investigations, including Biller (1970, 1971), Koch (1961), Lazowick (1955), Leichty (1960), McCord et al. (1962), Mussen (1961), Schoeppe et al. (1953), Stephens (1961), and Stolz et al. (1954), have examined the various relationships among father-absence, sex-role identification, adjustment problems, and anxiety levels in male children. A careful scrutiny of many of these investigations, however, yields a number of deficiencies which serve to restrict the scope of their interpretations. Many of the researchers, for example, have regarded father-absence in an overly simplistic fashion, failing to adequately specify and to explore the critical variables of type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate, each of which has been demonstrated to differentially influence the effects of father-absence (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1971; Biller & Bahm, 1971; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Goode, 1969; Hetherington, 1966, 1973; Nash, 1965; Pedersen & Rabson, 1969; Santrock, 1970a, 1970b; Steimel, 1960; Sutton-Smith et al., 1968; Wohlford et al., 1970).

Directly within the scope of this investigation, with the exception of Lazowick (1955), Leichty (1960), and Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1965), very few studies have empirically explored the relationship between father-absence

and anxiety levels in a male college population. Instead, much of the research has devoted its attention to studying, within child and adolescent populations, the various relationships between father-absence and sex-role identification, sex-role identification and anxiety, and father-absence and adjustment problems. When, in fact, father-absence and anxiety levels were directly investigated, child populations were utilized in studies that were characterized by insufficient controls. As a result, the precise relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels in a male college population, examining the long-term effects of anxiety purportedly initiated in and fostered by early childhood father-absence, is still in need of further clarification.

It was the purpose of this investigation, therefore, to determine whether a significant relationship exists between father-absence and anxiety levels in a male college population, while simultaneously examining the differential effects of type, length, age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate. Consequently, this investigation hypothesized that college males who have experienced early childhood father-absence will manifest significantly more anxiety than father-present college males. In addition, the following were hypothesized concerning the father-absent data: (1) father-absent anxiety levels will be differentially influenced by the categories of type of father-absence, divorce-separation-desertion and death-military service-employment; (2) father-absent anxiety levels will be differentially influenced by the categories of length

of father-absence, less than three years and over three years; (3) father-absent anxiety levels will be differentially influenced by the four categories of age of onset of father-absence, i.e., less than one year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and over five years; (4) father-absent anxiety levels will be differentially influenced by the presence and absence categories of availability of a father surrogate.

Chapter 4

Method

Subjects

Subjects were male, undergraduate college students, enrolled in three large midwestern universities. They ranged in age from 18 to 36 years, with most falling between 18 and 20. One the basis of a questionnaire administered to a population of 320 males, 59 individuals were identified as father-absent. From the remaining 261 males in this population, 59 father-present persons were selected at random.

Instruments

The Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS) was utilized as the measure of general, chronic anxiety levels (see Appendix A). Developed by Taylor (1953), it consists of 50 true-false items drawn from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory which were judged by five clinical psychologists to be indicative of manifest anxiety. Separate sex norms are included and are based on a sample of 1,971 undergraduate college students. Scoring yields quantative results totaling 0 to 50, with higher scores reflecting higher anxiety levels.

The internal consistency of the test has been determined to be relatively high. Hilgard, Jones, and Kaplan (1951) reported a split-half reliability coefficient of

.92 for the test. The MAS has also demonstrated adequate stability of test scores over time. Taylor (1953) reported a test-retest reliability of .89 over a three week period, .82 over a five-month period, and .81 over nine to 17 months.

Studies dealing with the validity of the MAS as measure of anxiety suggest that it correlates positively with other paper and pencil measures of anxiety. Raphelson (1957), for example, reported a correlation of .53 between the MAS and a paper and pencil measure of the tendency to become anxious in testing situations, which was developed by Mandler and Sarason (1952). Scores on the MAS have also been determined to be related to clinical judgements of anxiety. Buss, Wiener, Durkee, and Baer (1955) reported a correlation of .60 between MAS scores and pooled ratings of anxiety of neuropsychiatric patients conducted by four clinical psychologists.

The father-absence questionnaire (see Appendix B) was composed of two sections. The first section consisted of pertinent background information, which included chronological age, marital status, race, sibling constellation, birth order, socioeconomic background, and specific historical data concerning the applicability of father-absence, which was operationally defined as the father's physical absence from the home on a continuous basis before the individual entered elementary school. This latter information specified the four critical variables of father-absence: type, length, age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate, each of which was divided into

appropriate categories. Type of father-absence, as suggested by the research of Benson (1968), Hetherington (1973), and Goode (1969), was divided into (1) divorce-separation-desertion and (2) death-military service-employment. Similarly, length of father-absence, utilizing Biller (1971), was categorized into (1) less than three years and (2) over three years. The investigations of Biller and Bahn (1971), Blanchard and Biller (1971), Hetherington (1966), Pedersen and Rabson (1969), and Santrock (1970b) influenced the division of age of onset into (1) 1 year or less, (2) 1-3 years, (3) 3-5 years, and (4) over 5 years. Finally, as suggested by Nash (1965), Santrock (1970a), Steimel (1960), Sutton-Smith et al. (1968), and Wohlford et al. (1970), availability of a father surrogate was divided into (1) presence and (2) absence categories.

Procedure

Male, undergraduate students from three midwestern universities were recruited to voluntarily participate in the research investigation. Students were petitioned to complete the instruments as truthfully as possible.

At the conclusion of the administrations, each of the questionnaires was examined to determine the applicability of father-absence, operationally defined as the father's physical absence from the home on a continuous basis before the individual entered elementary school. The results of this examination were utilized to select 59 father-absent individuals who had indicated in their questionnaires that they had experienced father-absence, and 59 father-present

individuals who were chosen at random from the 261 who had indicated that they had not experienced father-absence. Following the selection of the 59 father-absent males and the 59 father-present males, each person's MAS protocol was scored by standardized procedures without reference to identifying data (Taylor, 1953). Scoring yielded quantative results falling between 1 and 36, with higher scores reflecting higher anxiety levels. In addition, to accommodate the chi square operations in the analysis, the MAS scores of the 59 father-absent individuals were arbitrarily divided into thirds, yielding low (1-11), medium (12-19), and high (20-36) categories, and into halves, yielding low (1-15) and high (16-36) categories.

Analysis

Response data from the questionnaires were examined in two major analyses. In the first analysis, each of the 59 father-absent students was randomly paired with one of the 59 father-present students and a t test for differences between the MAS means of the two groups was applied according to standard statistical procedures. If the probability associated with the value of t was determined to be significant ($p < .05$) in a one-tailed test, the null hypothesis, stating that there was no difference between the MAS means of the father-absence and father-presence groups, would be rejected.

The second major analysis applied four separate and distinct chi square operations in standard statistical procedures, comparing MAS scores of the 59 father-absent males

with each of the categories of type, length, and age of onset of father-absence and availability of a father-surrogate. The first operation, anxiety versus type of father-absence, compared low, medium, and high MAS scores with the divorce-separation-desertion category and with the death-military service-employment category. In the second operation, anxiety versus length of father-absence, low, medium, and high MAS scores were compared with the less than three years category and with the over three years category. The third operation examined anxiety versus age of onset and compared low and high MAS scores with each of the following categories: 1 year or less, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and over 5 years. Finally, the fourth operation, anxiety versus availability of a father surrogate, compared low, medium, and high MAS scores with the presence/absence categories.

If each of the chi square distributions was found significant ($p < .05$), the null hypotheses, stating that the MAS anxiety levels would not be differentially distributed among the categories of each of the variables of father-absence, would be rejected.

Chapter 5

Results

Two major analyses, a *t* test for differences between the MAS means and four separate chi square operations, were employed to test the hypotheses of this investigation. In the first analysis, the MAS means of the father-absence and father-presence groups were 16.42 and 13.93, respectively. An application of a *t* test for differences between these means yielded insignificant results, $t(58)=1.54$, $p > .05$. The null hypothesis was thus accepted.

In the second analysis, four separate chi square operations examining the questionnaire and MAS data from the 59 father-absent individuals were utilized to delineate specific sources of anxiety within the father-absence group. Although the *t* test did not indicate significant differences in anxiety between the father-absent and father-present males, it was possible that the chi square analysis of the data from the father-absence group would reveal significant differences associated with the variables previously found to differentially influence the effects of father-absence, i.e., type, length, and age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate.

In the first operation, anxiety versus type of father-absence, the chi square computation yielded an insignificant distribution, $x^2(2)=1.72$, $p > .05$ (see Appendix C). The null

hypothesis was accepted. Anxiety versus length of father-absence, the second operation, also yielded an insignificant distribution, $x^2(3)= .977$, $p > .05$ (see Appendix D), resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. The third chi square operation, examining anxiety versus age of onset of father-absence, yielded an insignificant distribution, $x^2(2)=2.64$, $p > .05$ (see Appendix E), and the null hypothesis was accepted. Finally, anxiety versus availability of a father surrogate, the fourth operation, similarly yielded an insignificant distribution, $x^2(2)= 1.34$, p .05 (see Appendix F). The null hypothesis was accepted.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The results of this investigation appear to raise some questions concerning the relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels in a male college population. A *t* test comparing the differences between the MAS means of the father-absence and father-presence groups and four separate chi square operations comparing MAS anxiety levels in the father-absence group as to type, length, and age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate, failed to obtain significant results. These findings suggest that anxiety, as a concomitant effect of father-absence, may not be as powerful or as viable as many researchers have believed.

In the first analysis, although the MAS means were in the anticipated direction, a *t* test comparison of the father-absence and father-presence groups was insignificant. In contrast, studies with children have found father-absence related to general anxiety (Koch, 1961; Stolz et al., 1954) and anxiety associated with sex and sex-role identification (McCord et al., 1962; Stephens, 1961). Additional studies have suggested that difficulties in sex-role identification are related to anxiety within adolescent and college populations. Two of these studies specifically related anxiety, as measured by the MAS, to sex-role identification

problems in a college population (Lazowick, 1955; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1965). The third study (Leichty, 1960) found father-absence related to sexual anxiety in a college population. However, a projective technique designed for children, and thus less suitable for college students, was employed as the anxiety measure. In view of this logic, this investigation expected to find a significant relationship between father-absence and anxiety levels in a male college population.

There are, however, several possible explanations for the failure to find significance. One explanation relates to the nature and composition of this investigation's sample, which is probably older, more intelligent, and of a higher socioeconomic class than the majority of the samples in the studies reviewed. For example, father-absent males in a college sample may have acquired, in the intervening period of years since childhood, the necessary and sufficient responsibility, maturity, and independence to work through and eventually resolve the supposedly chronic effects of anxiety stemming from father-absence. Furthermore, a college sample's superior cognitive functioning can be a decided advantage in facilitating a mastery of the environment and of problem solving, illustrated in abilities to understand the world, to plan for the future, and to cope effectively with perceived crises.

Another characteristic of the sample is that it probably includes fewer lower class individuals, who are particularly more vulnerable to the debilitating effects of

father-absence than are individuals from middle and upper socioeconomic classes (Biller, 1971). This sampling bias may have served to reduce the extent of some of the more harmful effects of father-absence in the population from which this study's sample was drawn.

A final explanation for the failure to find significance in the t test involves the choice of the Manifest Anxiety Scale as an anxiety indicator. Since the MAS is a measure of general, chronic anxiety, this scale may not have been sufficiently sensitive. Perhaps a scale which assesses a more specific type of anxiety, such as that related to sex-role identification, would have detected significant differences.

In the second analysis, four separate chi square operations on the MAS scores within the father-absence group examined the differential effects of type, length, and age of onset of father-absence, and availability of a father surrogate on anxiety. Many researchers have found that these factors differentially influence the effects of father-absence in child populations (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1971; Biller & Bahm, 1971; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Goode, 1961; Hetherington, 1966, 1973; Nash, 1965; Pedersen & Rabson, 1969; Santrock, 1970a, 1970b; Steimel, 1960; Sutton-Smith et al., 1968; Wohlford et al., 1970). The results of this chi square analysis failed to support any of the investigation's hypotheses. Perhaps the factors examined in this investigation are not the significant variables which influence anxiety in father-absence males. More relevant variables

may be involved which were not within the scope of this study.

Another possible explanation for the lack of significance in the chi square analysis is, as in the case of the *t* test, that the college sample varies in chronological age and competency compared to the samples of the reported literature. In contrast to this investigation's college-age population, all of the cited research exploring the differential influence of type, length, and age of onset, and availability of a father surrogate was conducted utilizing child and younger adolescent populations. As alluded to earlier, this intervening period of years may be critical in supplying the responsibility, maturity, and independence to help reduce or even eradicate the supposedly chronic effects of early childhood father-absence.

Consequently, a college population of father-absent males may appear to possess the requisite knowledge and skills which several researchers, including Biller (1970), Bronfebrenner (1961), Mussen et al. (1963), Rosen and D'Andrade (1959), and Van Manen (1968), have deemed so essential and critical for adequately preparing children for life and therefore for facilitating the resolution of the chronic effects of anxiety stemming from early childhood father-absence.

Implications for further research would include more systematic and controlled investigations of the differential effects of such variables as mother-child relationship, sex of the child, and sociocultural background of the family. Future studies might investigate the effect of the mother's

personality on father-absent children. More sensitive anxiety measures might be employed to detect specific types of anxiety related to father-absence. Finally, longitudinal research might examine the developmental changes in anxiety related to father-absence. As suggested by this study, the effects of father-absence may be more marked in younger children than in older males.

Appendix A

CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS

1. T F I do not tire quickly.
2. T F I am troubled by attacks of nausea.
3. T F I believe that I am no more nervous than most others.
4. T F I have very few headaches.
5. T F I work under a great deal of tension.
6. T F I cannot keep my mind on one thing.
7. T F I worry over money and business.
8. T F I frequently notice my hand shakes when I try to do something.
9. T F I blush no more often than others.
10. T F I have diarrhea once a month or more.
11. T F I worry quite a bit over possible misfortunes.
12. T F I practically never blush.
13. T F I am often afraid that I am going to blush.
14. T F I have nightmares every few nights.
15. T F My hands and feet are usually warm enough.
16. T F I sweat very easily even on cool days.
17. T F Sometimes when embarrassed I break out in a sweat which annoys me greatly.
18. T F I hardly ever notice my heart pounding and I am seldom short of breath.
19. T F I feel hungry almost all the time.
20. T F I am very seldom troubled by constipation.
21. T F I have a great deal of stomach trouble.
22. T F I have had periods in which I lost sleep over worry.
23. T F My sleep is fitful and disturbed.
24. T F I dream frequently about things that are best kept to myself.
25. T F I am easily embarrassed.
26. T F I am more sensitive than most people.
27. T F I frequently find myself worrying over something.
28. T F I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.
29. T F I am usually calm and not easily upset.
30. T F I cry easily.
31. T F I feel anxiety about something or someone almost all the time.
32. T F I am happy most of the time.
33. T F It makes me nervous to have to wait.
34. T F I have periods of such great restlessness that I cannot sit long in a chair.
35. T F Sometimes I become so excited that I find it hard to get to sleep.
36. T F I have sometimes felt that difficulties were piling up so high that I could not overcome them.
37. T F I must admit that I have at times been worried beyond reason over something that really did not matter.

38. T F I have very few fears compared to my friends.
39. T F I have been afraid of things or people that I know could not hurt me.
40. T F I certainly feel useless at times.
41. T F I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or a job.
42. T F I am usually self-conscious.
43. T F I am inclined to take things hard.
44. T F I am a high-strung person.
45. T F Life is a strain for me much of the time.
46. T F At times I think I am no good at all.
47. T F I am certainly lacking in self-confidence.
48. T F I sometimes feel that I am about to go to pieces.
49. T F I shrink from facing a crisis or difficulty.
50. T F I am entirely self-confident.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION.

Appendix B

This questionnaire is part of a research investigation that is being conducted by a graduate student in clinical psychology. Your cooperation in filling it out as honestly and truthfully as possible will be greatly appreciated. All of the information will be considered strictly confidential. Thank you.

_____
Student ID number (Social Security Number)

_____ _____ _____
Class Days Time

_____
Instructor

(1) Birthdate _____ _____ _____, Age _____

(2) Circle your marital status. (single) (married) (separated) (divorced) (widower)

(3) Circle your race. (Caucasian) (Negro) (Oriental) (Other)

(4) List the ages of any brothers you have. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

(5) List the ages of any sisters you have. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

(6) Circle your religious preference or affiliation. (Protestant) (Roman Catholic) (Jewish) (Other) (None)

(7) Circle the approximate annual income of your family. (less than $5,000) ($5,000-$10,000) ($11,000-$15,000) ($16,000-$25,000) (above $26,000)

(8) In which state is your family home?_____
(Write "None" if home is other than U.S.A.)

(9) Circle the population of the city or community in which your family lives. (under 10,000) (10,000-50,000) (50,000-100,000) (100,000-500,000) (500,000-1,000,000) (over 1,000,000)

(10) Before you entered elementry school, was your father ever absent or gone from your home on a continuous basis due to death, separation, divorce, military service, etc.? (Yes) (No)

If "Yes"

(A) Circle the reason or cause for his absence from the home. (Death) (Separation) (Divorce) (Military service) (Desertion) (Other)

(B) Circle approximately how long he was absent or gone. (less than 6 months) (6 months-1 year) (1-1½ years) (1½-2 years) 2-2½ years) (2½-3 years) (over 3 years)

(C) Circle approximately how old you were when your father left your home. (less than 6 months) (6 months-1 year) (1-1½ years) (1½-2 years) (2-2½ years) (2½-3 years) (3-3½ years) (3½-4 years) (4-4½ years) (4½-5 years) (over 5 years)

(D) During the period of your father's absence from your home, was there, in your estimation, a father substitute, such as a grandfather, uncle, or older brother, that lived with you and your family? (Yes) (No) If "Yes", approximately how long was this father substitute available to you? _____

(11) As you were growing up, was your father available to you and your family on a regular basis in your home? (Yes) (No)

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2 AND READ EACH STATEMENT CAREFULLY. THEN DECIDE WHETHER IT IS TRUE AS APPLIED TO YOU OR FALSE AS APPLIED TO YOU

Appendix C

Contingency Table Comparing MAS Anxiety Levels

With Type of Father-Absence

(N=59)

Type of Father-Absence	MAS Anxiety Levels		
	Low	Medium	High
Divorce-Separation-Desertion	9.15	8.69	9.15
Death-Military Service-Employment	10.85	10.30	10.83

Appendix D

Contingency Table Comparing MAS Anxiety Levels

With Length of Father-Absence

(N=59)

Length of Father-Absence	MAS Anxiety Levels		
	Low	Medium	High
Less Than Three Years	10.17	9.66	10.17
Over Three Years	9.83	9.34	9.83

Appendix E

Contingency Table Comparing MAS Anxiety Levels

With Age of Onset of Father-Absence

(N=59)

	MAS Anxiety Levels	
Age of Onset of Father-Absence	Low	High
Less than 1 Year	7.63	7.37
1-3 Years	6.61	6.39
3-5 Years	8.14	7.86
Over 5 Years	7.63	7.37

Appendix F

Contingency Table Comparing MAS Anxiety Levels

With Availability of a Father Surrogate

(N=59)

	MAS Anxiety Levels		
Availability of a Father Surrogate	Low	Medium	High
Presence	7.46	7.08	7.46
Absence	12.54	11.91	12.54

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