Family Integration And Children?S Self-Esteem Essay, Research Paper

Family Integration and Children?s Self-Esteem

Introduction:

The study of Family Integration and Children?s Self-Esteem that I examined was conducted by Yabiku, Axinn, and Thornton (1999). The term ?family integration? is used to describe the extent to which individual lives are characterized by a high degree of family organization. This article examines the theory of family integration and the way in which the family social organization affects individuals.

Discussion:

It is hypothesized that when both parents are integrated in the family, it benefits their children?s development of self. Using panel data, they test three mechanisms of parental family integration ? activities within the home, family social networks, and family support networks. The results show that parental family integration early in a child?s life has positive effects on the child?s self-esteem in early adulthood, as a 23-year-old young adult. These findings provide important new understanding into both the social courses affecting self-esteem, and the long-term results of the numerous dimensions of family integration.

They established three theories:

(1) To draw on the modes of social organization approach to derive a theoretical model arguing that family integration develops when family organization of activities are high;

(2) Empirical tests of this hypothesis investigate the long-term impact of family integration in early childhood on young adulthood self-esteem;

(3) The nature of family integration is multidimensional, giving both theoretical consideration and empirical attention to its multiple dimensions.

Sample:

The data came from a 23-year intergenerational, seven-wave panel study of mothers and their children. The mothers were selected using a systematic probability sample of the 1961 birth records from the Detroit Metropolitan Area. The study chose equal numbers of married white women from three counties ? Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb. All had recently given birth to a first, second, or fourth child. The 1113 mothers were originally interviewed in the winter of 1962. Then re-interviewed in the fall of 1962, again in 1963, 1966, 1977, 1980 and lastly 1985. The children born in 1961 were interviewed in 1980, at age 18, and again in 1985, at age 23. The analysis sample was 913 of the children interviewed in 1985 and their mothers. The 913 had no missing data for the necessary variables.

Method:

Researchers used the panel study method, a series of questions with a specific numbered coding of responses. The children were questioned using questions directly from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, additional questions were added specifically tailored to the study.

Findings:

Researchers found a critical link between a child?s self-esteem, and their family?s integration and that these influences effect the child?s self esteem not only through their years growing up but also into young adulthood. Family Activities could be anything from doing dishes together, playing board games, attending church, to organized sports where a parent is possibly the coach ? these all can have a beneficial effect on a child?s self-esteem. Family Social Networks supplied another important facet of family integration ? they increase family solidarity and the intergenerational interaction of the child?s extended family has a beneficial and momentous effect on a child?s self-esteem. Family Support Networks also provide beneficial effects on a child?s self-esteem; it re-affirms the family unit and blends both the giving and receiving family members together.

Concerns affecting the results of the study were first, that the benefit of family integration might be more beneficial to males than females. Males in integrated families may feel nurtured and cared for, where females may feel that their purpose is to become caregivers rather than pursuing their own individual goals. Second, that family integration may be the result of gender struggles within the family. Mothers within the household were prevented from pursuing activities of true interest in order to keep the family together and running smoothly. Third, that parents with more education have higher self-esteem ? thereby passing that increase on to their children, the other side of the coin involving parents with less education have lower self-esteem ? thereby passing the deficit on to their children. Fourth, that additional negative effects involve hyperintegration: this includes crowding ? too many people in a confined space, over involvement of extended family members in the intimate family workings, and destructive or socially pathological behavior, such as alcoholism, substance, physical and psychological abuse.

Critique:

I would have liked to see at least two more contacts with the children of this study. I feel that an observational study at age 5 or 6 and a questionnaire at 13 or 14 would have given additional depth to the data and reflected a truer effect of family integration and self-esteem on the children. As it stands, the children were not ?contacted? until after they were young adults and some feelings of self-esteem could have been influenced by incidences at school or within the job market rather than from the family unit. The additional work addressed in the article did fill in many of the gaps missing from the body of work covered by the study data.

Conclusion:

What did I get from the article? This article illustrated Family integration at it?s best can prepare a child for their role in society, as a confident self-assured adult ? possessing positive self image ? positive self esteem. Prepared to get along with people, express ideas, work in-groups and accomplish a common goal. These children normally work well with others, are leaders within their peer group and go on to raise children with positive self image themselves. It also illustrated the other side of Family Integration ? Hyperintegration ? the dysfunctional families we are all familiar with — the overcrowded, meddling, abusive, alcoholic, substance controlled individuals that can make family life miserable and destroy the self esteem of the children they control. These families become encapsulated unable to function within the norm of the general population. Their children face the same trouble dealing with peers and finding their place in the world ? because they haven?t been given the tools with which to work out their problems within their own family much less the rest of the world. In essence, it does take a village to raise a child ? but it also helps if all of the tribe members have the child?s best interest at heart.

Bibliography

Scott T Yabiku, William G. Axiinn, and Arland Thornton, 1999. ?Family Integration and

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