Fathers Aren’t All the Same and That’s OK: Patterns, Predictors, and Outcomes of Father Involvement Using Latent Profile Analysis

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Introduction
Previous research has investigated the association between father involvement and child and adolescent outcomes. Most of the research has suggested that there is a direct link between the amount of father involvement and outcomes. Folkvord (1997) has suggested that it is important to examine fathering in a more subjective manner, that there are many factors that determine involvement, and many ways to be involved.

Research Questions
1. How many patterns of father involvement emerge from a measure of 9 dimensions of father involvement?
2. Are the profiles related to adolescent outcomes?
3. What factors predict profile membership?

Sample
414 participants (M = 19.49, SD = 1.48); 54% female; 11% African American, 5% Asian American, 73% European American, 8% Latino, 2% other.

Methods
Control Variable:
Maternal Authoritative Parenting - CPRDI (Tschann, 1986) 
q=30, # of questions: 40
Included in the model to account for the fact that mothers’ parenting style will influence fathers’ and children’s behavior

Methods (cont’d)

Question 2 – Adolescent Outcomes

Being Asian American increased the probability of being in Profiles 1, 2, and 5 as opposed to Profile 4.

Being married to the adolescent’s biological mother increased the probability of being in Profiles 1, 2, 3, and 4 as opposed to Profile 3.

Being more educated increased the probability of being in Profile 1 as opposed to Profile 2 or 3.

Having a higher family income increased the probability of being in Profile 1 or 2 as opposed to Profile 4.

Being nonresident increased the probability of being in Profile 5 as opposed to Profile 1.

Discussion

Patterns
5 patterns of fathering behavior emerged.

Adolescent Outcomes
Profile 2 seems to be associated with more negative outcomes. It could be that these fathers are focusing on providing and pressuring their adolescents to do well in school and to think about the future, while at the same time not supporting the mother or showing the adolescent warmth or support. Perhaps this pressure is causing them distress or to act out or to engage in drug and alcohol abuse to cope with the pressure.

If one looks only at the graph, one might erroneously conclude that low father involvement (Profile 5) leads to less antisocial behavior. However, please note that for antisocial behavior there was no statistically significant difference between Profiles 1, 2, 4, and 5. Additionally, it should be noted that Profile 5 had the fewest number of fathers and these fathers were likely to be absent nonresident fathers.

Therefore, it is also likely that these adolescents with absent nonresident fathers had mothers or stepfathers who engaged in behavior that helped buffer them from the negative effects of having an absent father.

Prediction
Ethnicity, marital status, education, income, and nonresident status were related to the likelihood of profile membership.

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