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JOHN B. LACSON FOUNDATION MARITIME UNIVERSITY-MOLO
Research Department
Iloilo City

**A HOME WITHOUT A FATHER: COPING MECHANISMS OF CHILDREN OF
SEAFARERS**

A Research Presented to the
Faculty Members of the College of Engineering
John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University-Molo
Iloilo City

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (BS Mar-E)

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October 2012

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Abstract

Little or no research has investigated how father absence can affect the children's developmental years. This study entitled, *Living without a Father: Coping Mechanisms of Children of Seafarers* answers the simple questions on how the children of seafarers deal with their problems in their day-to-day life. The study probed deeper into the different problems of the children whose fathers are away because of work. Thus, this paper addressed the following questions: 1) Do children of seafarers find it difficult to grow up without a father? 2) Do they feel envious of those children whose fathers are with them while growing up? 3) Have they thought of denying that their father is not away? 4) Are they contented with material things provided to them? 5) Are they proud being a child of a seafarer? 6) Have they rebelled against their parents? 7) Have they blamed their father because of their work as a seafarer? 8) Have they experienced being bullied by other children because of their father's absence? 9) What are the strategies they use if they have problems? This descriptive study made use of the frequencies, percentages, and rank. The respondents' answers to the interview were interpreted through the process of categorization. Results showed that 1) Eighty percent (80 %) of the children of seafarers do not find it difficult to live without their fathers. The 20 percent of the respondents have difficulty living without their fathers with them. 2) Sixty percent (60%) of the children of seafarers are not envious of those children whose fathers are with them while growing up, 40% were otherwise. 3) Seventy percent (70%) of the children of seafarers have not thought of denying that their fathers are not away. The 30% think otherwise. 4) Fifty percent (50 %) of the children of seafarers are contented with material things provided to them while growing up and fifty percent were otherwise. 5) Seventy percent (70%) of the children of seafarers are proud being children of seafarers. The 30% are otherwise. 6) Ninety percent (90%) of the children of seafarers were good children and did not rebel against their parents. The other 10% did rebel to their parents. 7) Majority of the children of seafarers (90%) do not blame their fathers because of their work as seafarers. Ten percent (10%) thinks otherwise. 8) Despite of their fathers' absence, only 30 percent had experienced being bullied by other

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children. The other 70 percent did not experience bullying. 9) The children of seafarers' coping mechanism were surrender, avoidance, and overcompensation. The following conclusions were: 1) The absence of the children of seafarers' fathers has an effect on them. 2) Envy is caused in the absence of their fathers. 3) Denial is often an excuse made by the children in their fathers' absence. 4) Material things cannot compensate their growing up without their fathers. 5) Children of seafarers are proud being children of seafarers despite the absence of the latter. 6) Growing without their fathers does not make them rebellious children. 7) The children do blame their fathers because of their work as seafarers. 8) Bullying is a perennial problem not only for children of seafarers. 9) The coping mechanisms were different for each respondent. The following are the recommendations: 1) Children with absent fathers are reported to be the most vulnerable and problematic children (Arendell, 1993; Garry, 1997; Wark, 2000; Parker, 1991), thus programs in the University have to be provided so that children of seafarers have to be guided accordingly so as to build their morale and self-confidence. 2) Children with absent fathers report to lack emotional stability, as absent fathers negatively influence child's activity, academic performance, attitude to the future, and the level of self-appraisal (Goldberg, 1995; Herzog et al., 1971; Phares, 1992; Sills, 1995), to mention a few; thus, schools offering marine engineering and other related courses must be cognizant of their students' emotional and behavioral problems so as to provide measures to address these gaps while the children are growing up. 3) Parallel studies must be conducted to validate other factors that may pose an effect on the lives of the children of seafarers not only their fathers' absence.