

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the perceptions and experiences of selected fathers as they relate to actual fathering behaviour. Qualitative research methodology was used to explore the specific objectives, namely, to elicit the perceptions and experiences of selected fathers, to obtain information on the fathering behaviour of the men, to conduct a gender analysis of the influence of perceptions on actual fathering behaviour. The final sample comprised twelve (12) respondents inclusive of fathers aged 24 to 50 years of lower and /or middle-income families in Jamaica. A preliminary phase with 6 fathers helped to determine the major issues of exploration. The research parameters were further refined and data were collected during preliminary discussions, focus group discussions and in depth interviews. The main findings were as follows, the men's preoccupation with the biological claim to fatherhood which is seen as a validation of manhood, the strong influence of socio-cultural norms and the approval of other men, insecure sex role identity leading to poor male-female relationships, uncertainty regarding the 'expected' male and 'father' role.

Key Words: Sharon Coburn Robinson, fatherhood, fathering behaviour, gender, family, Caribbean, perceptions, experiences, socialization.