

Getting Parents Involved

Sociology 345

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Abstract

This research was done on parental involvement in their child's education. The study used 10 previous literary sources, including qualitative and quantitative findings. This paper has found that in the quantitative findings that parental involvement with a child while doing something fun increased parental involvement, while parental involvement stayed neutral during less enjoyable actions. The parents seem to be less involved in the child's actual education than doing more enjoyable activities. The qualitative studies found the same thing, that parents enjoyed time with their child but gave less help with educational aspects. People of color were shown to be less involved than Caucasian parents with their children, and Head Start was instrumental in helping students who did not get much parental involvement in their education.

Introduction

The people that would fully understand their child the best are the parents of the child. With this they see how the child is growing in their education and seeing how they are evolving. Parental involvement does so much for the child it helps them grow and want to be involved in the education they are learning. With one little glimpse of parent involvement you can see a change in the child with education and can see the involvement of parents having a good time spending with their child.

From the article by Salin (2017) the group Human and Hope Association focus on education. They have faced difficulty with the lack of parents' involvement in the child's education. The Human and Hope Association is a group that explains the huge role parents play in their children's education by saying their role can help a child's self esteem and academic abilities, helps a child have more positive attitude towards school, and helps a parent understand the school process as well as their children better (Salin, 2017). The Human and Hope

Association also tries to figure out why the involvement of parents in the child's education is challenging because of the shortage of time. The parents have a bad experience in school and they are trying to stay away from the school, and the parent feels illiterate and they do not know how to talk to a teacher so they can learn how to get involved in their child's education (Salin, 2017).

This paper is all about why parents should be involved in their students' studies, and how that can be achieved by looking at the common levels of interaction in different aspects, such as enjoyable activities and school work. There was also research done on different races and their interactions with their children and how they change, and the connection between race, SES, and the time the parents have to spend with their children. This paper contains a literature review, quantitative findings and qualitative findings to support this theory.

Literature Review

Traditional parental involvement research has stated the multitudes of ways a parent can get involved with their children's school life. The parents can volunteer at the schools, talk to the teachers by having teacher parent conferences, help with homework, and attend their child's school events (Epstein et al., 2009; Hill & Taylor, 2004). The Epstein model shows a traditional model of parenting involvement through six types of parental involvement. The researchers stated that the six concrete types of parental involvement in Epstein's model are as follows, having positive home conditions, communication involvement the parent has with child and the teacher, getting involved with the child's school, learning activities to do with the child at home, make decisions on what happens in the schools, and getting involved with the schools community partnerships (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein et al., 2009). The research in the Epstein model on defining parental involvement helps show the traditional model of parenting.

While looking through the eyes of the African Americans and Latino families researcher Simoni and Adelman (1993) found that in the minority groups parents reveal that they show lower rates of parental involvement in the child's academic life. With a tendency for a lower SES, African American and Latino households have their parents working more than one job to just support their family. This brings up that they can not spend more time with the child and be involved in their education as much as Caucasian parents.

The factors affecting socioeconomic status, income, education and occupation vary greatly for different people. The two ways income can be looked at are relative and absolute. Research done by the economist John Maynard Keynes states that absolute income has been theorized to show that the relationship in which the increase in income is so as consumption, but will not at the same rate. Relative income dictates the look at a person or family's savings and the outcome based on the amount of income to other families. Relative income is the easiest and most commonly used method to measure socioeconomic status of a person or family because it is easy for anyone to figure out. Boushev (2005) stated that low income families are focusing more on meeting their immediate goals they need to survive. Meaning they do not have any accumulated wealth that can be passed down to future generations, which is increasing inequality in low income families.

Someone's education understanding is considered to be the overall achievement shown through the grades or degree they have received. Research done by Annette in 2003 shows that those with the highest degrees, professional and doctoral degrees, make the highest amount of money while the ones without a high school diploma make little income in their jobs. Higher educational levels a shift becomes visible which starts to separate the groups of people or families from one another in socioeconomic status. Many believe that lower income families

have children that will not succeed while middle income families' children are more prepared for adult life (Annette, 2003). Lower income families tend to have to work multiple jobs, meaning the parents have less time to be involved in their child's school life. This inability to attend school events causes a subconscious bias in teachers that makes them believe the student will not be as successful as their peers with parents who are able to contribute to the school's community life because they believe the student does not have ample support at home.

Head Start was built on civil rights advocacy, and a long term help from private and governmental funded US early childhood education programs. President Johnson, in a special message on January 12, 1965, announced the creation of Head Start to Congress. This helped to focus on the expansion of preschool programs that would reach out to disadvantaged children early on (Osborn, 1991). There were varying views on how this program should be handled and who should qualify for this program. The program focused on children that were in poverty areas and the program had to consider either removing lower income children from their parents or helping influence their parents to meet the child's needs. Osborn's research states that this led to the cultural deprivation theory, which states that poor children need to be educated to have the opportunities to learn the values from the middle class. This would also introduce the work ethic that would rectify the actions of the poor and have them act like higher income Americans (Kuntz, 1998). Head Start had another role; they would provide education for children that were struggling, as well as nutrition and comprehensive health. The Head Start program was created to help to give the low income families a voice. Hymes and Osborn (1979) stated in their research that Head Start's goal was to help give roles to the parents in their child's education, and it has been noted to give special opportunities to minority groups.

Parental involvement in a student's life can be affected by many factors, some directly such as the parents socioeconomic status, and some indirectly such as the parents' race (Simoni and Adelman, 1993). A parent's income level also affects their ability to be involved in their child's school life, and this problem caused the creation of programs such as Head Start, which helps children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Osborn, 1991). A parent's involvement in a student's life is of utmost importance, and with the many factors that can deter this, it is important that schools and society make room for these individuals.

Data and Methodology

Instrument

A survey questionnaire was created by the 40 members of the Social Research and Program Evaluation team at Longwood University. The survey contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. Items on the survey were designed to evaluate SMART objectives of each of five activities that were completed the previous week by Head Start families. Beyond the objectives of the activities, participants were asked about their experiences with Head Start, take home activities, and demographic information about their households.

Sample

The non-probability sample for this study was based on the 51 children (ages three to five) who attend Head Start in two rural counties in Virginia. After activities were sent home with children for five days, the questionnaire was sent home with all 51 students. Attached to the questionnaire was a children's book, to incentivize families to return the survey. Guardians of the children were asked to complete the survey and return it to the Head Start teacher the following school day. 0 questionnaires were returned the next school day. Teachers then sent a reminder

home with children to return any outstanding questionnaires. This resulted in 11 more questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 22% response rate.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the returned surveys is based on the close-ended questions. For this study the dependent variable is parent involvement. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was “How willing would you be to do Family Fun Activities like this one in the future?”. The answer choices for this item were (Scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount). The independent variable for this study is the parent's involvement with the child and their education. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was “How much did you assist your child in this activity?”. The answer choices for this question were on a scale 0-10; 0=not at all 10= great amount. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the returned surveys is based on the open-ended questions. The open-ended questions on the survey were “What did your family enjoy most about these activities? (Please write in your response. Use the back sheet of paper if you run out of room)”, “What recommendations would you suggest to make these activities better?”, and “What are your favorite ways to spend time with your child?”. To answer the research question, [How do family fun activities encourage family/parent involvement?] Inductive open coding was used to determine reoccurring themes in the participant’s responses.

Findings

Quantitative

Dependent variable Figure 1

	mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation
Parent involvement	9.72	10	10	0.64

Dependent variable, is parent involvement measured in a scale from 0 to 10. For the quantitative finding section, the following variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation to the question in the survey; The mean for the set of data is 9.72. This means that the average for that data is 9.72. The median of the data as well as the mode of the data is 10. This shows the most common number and the number in the middle of the data is 10. The standard deviation is 0.64, which shows the data is 0.64 standard deviations away from the mean of the set. This data was collected from the research question v17 from the survey to explain how the data was broken up into the different parts to explain the information from the survey.

Independent variable Figure 2

	mean	median	mode	standard deviation
Involved in child education	7	7	7	2.4

Independent variable is parent involvement in their child and their education measured in a scale from 0 to 10. For the quantitative finding section, the following variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation to the

question in the survey; The mean for the set of data is 7. This means that the average for that data is 7. The median of the data as well as the mode of the data is 7. This shows the most common number and the number in the middle of the data is 7. The standard deviation is 2.4, which shows the data is 2.4 standard deviations away from the mean of the set. This data was collected from the research question v6 from the survey to explain how the data was broken up into the different parts to explain the information from the survey.

Bivariate variable Figure 3

	parent involvement in their child and their education	Parent involvement
1	1	10
2	6	10
3	7	10
4	8	10
5	9	9
6	10	8

The bivariate chart in figure 3 shows that from the the data collected every one that answered 1 on parent involvement in their child and their education, their average on parent involvement was a 10, then everyone that answered 6 on on parent involvement in their child and their education, their average on parent involvement was 10, everyone that answered 7 for parent involvement in their child and their education, their average was 10 for parent involvement, then everyone that answered 8 for parent involvement in their child and their education, their average was 10 for parent involvement , then everyone that answered 9, their average was 10, then everyone that answered 10 for parent involvement in their child and their education then, their average was 8 (How much did you assist your child in the activity (parent involvement in their child and their education)) The average that went up in benign chosen for question dealing with

parent involvement in their child and their education then the average went down in question dealing with parent involvement (How willing would you be to do Family Fun Activities like this one in the future (parent involvement)). Though the answers chosen in parent involvement in their child and their education when they were lower than the average in parent involvement chosen were higher in average. The two questions dealing with parent involvement in their child and their education and parent involvement the average is showing that with this the more parent involvement in helping with the child in the activity then they would chose less of choosing in doing the activity again but when there was less involvement or less help from the parent then the their showed more time in doing the activity or activities like this again.

Summary

From my literature review the knowledge of the two questions and the answers I have noticed that the help is good. When getting too much help from the parent then the parent would not want to do the activity as much. Though with little help then the child and parent would be more involved and would want to do the activity again.

Qualitative

In the qualitative data that was collected eleven surveys were coded. Three themes were formed. The three themes were family enjoyment, favorite way to spend time with their child, and recommendations for improvement.

Of the eleven surveys that were brought back to Headstart three of them included the code, family enjoyment. Respondent one stated, "We did each activity at least twice. I loved the organization, detailed instruction and the materials being included. I would pay for activities like this. Life is so busy. These activities made it so easy and stress free to do something together!". In the respondent's answer they were so thrilled to have these activities because it helps to make

their life easier for them to spend time with their child. The respondent felt that with the activity already created for them and their family it also made their life easier because they said life is so busy, then in the end activities that were created help to make something part of their life easy for them to do something with their child. Respondent two stated, "Spending time together, and learning new things". In the respondents answer it shows that they love being together when they can and that they have a close family. They also stated that they love to learn new things, so the activity helps them to come together and spend time with one another and learn something new that was created for them in the activities. Respondent four stated, "It brought a lot of fun and laughter for our family. My kid was able to learn a lot". In the respondents answer it showed that they had fun and enjoyed the activities throughout the week. With the activities given out to the kids, for respondent four they had learned a lot from the activities and doing them with the parent or parents.

From the eleven surveys that were brought back to Headstart there were two who included the code recommendations for improvement. Respondent six stated, "Involve the whole family more". With the respondent's answer you can see that they thought the activities did not have enough family involvement and the activities could have been better to involve the family more with each other. Respondent nine stated, "Stapling the instructions to the bags. We lost Dino bubbles instructions somewhere between nan's house and home". To show the respondents answer it shows that with stapling the instructions onto the bag it is a better chance that the instructions will not get lost from one destination to another destination easily.

From the eleven surveys that were brought back to Headstart three included the code favorite way to spend time with their child. Respondent one stated, "# 1 is singing and dancing together!, cooking, arts/crafts, reading, and going for walks". In the respondents answer they

like to do a lot to spend whatever way they can to spend time with their child. Through spending time with their child they had a list of what is their number one favorite thing to do to spend time with their child and then other things they do as well in the list to show how they spend time with their child. Respondent six stated, “Reading and playing house and painting”. The answer given from the respondent was another list showing what they like to do with their child but did not have a number one thing for their all time favorite thing to do with their child just a general list of some favorite things they enjoy doing to spend time with their child. Respondent eight stated, “drawing (with chalk on the sidewalk making up our own stories and drawing a picture about it) and cooking (she likes to make her own pizza). With the respondent's answers they said what was their favorite thing to do with the child and the respondent gave a little background information on what is done with the favorite things that they do with their child.

In the research from the qualitative finds from the themes that were discovered and created from the eleven surveys that were brought back to Headstart. There was a sense of love the respondent had for their child and that they wanted the child to have a great time while spending time and get involved with them in the activities. With the activities and seeing the data collected from the open-end questions from the survey they showed that the respondents did not have many recommendations on what could be improved from the activities but from the couple of the responders that did have recommendations for a change for the activities they told us by letting us know and what we could do better. Also with the respondents from the survey when they respond to the favorite activity to do with their child they would list many things and then would give a little background information on what they do. From the research found you see that the most important thing is spending time with the child and enjoying being with each other and having that little time and away from everything else.

Conclusion

With all the information from the literature review to my findings, I have been able to show that the parent's involvement is necessary for the child to grow and grow in the child's education. The Head Start program is where the child can go to get help in the education where they can get the help when the parent can not always be around to help and be involved with the child because of certain reasons like education, SES, and parental involvement.

In the finding you can see that the response rate was low from getting the surveys that were given out to the Head Start program so they could give to the parents and they can do them with their children. 51 surveys were sent out to various families in the program, however, only 11 were returned completed by families which was a 22% response rate. This made the quantitative finding more difficult, as the goal was to get a 70% response rate for the sheet given. The information gathered was still used, regardless of the low response rate.

This was done to show that parental involvement is important, regardless of the family's background. Students need the help of their parents, as it helps the child in their education and personal life. With COVID-19 and school beginning again, there was a low response rate. This shows just how busy families get and that they simply may not have the time to interact with their children, especially during the school year, when a child may need them most. However, families should find time or a trusted group to help their child in this way, as it is imperative to the child's wellbeing.

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