

Caroline Smith

Department of Sociology, Longwood University

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Dr. Pederson

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Abstract

My research question is, “How do family fun time activities improve family involvement?” The dependent variable being measured is family involvement. The participants in this study included families from Head Start and The Andy Taylor Center. Surveys addressed demographic information, enjoyment of the activities, family involvement, and completion of the activities. Hard copies of the questionnaire were delivered to Head Start and the Andy Taylor Center. The non-probability sample for this study was based on 100 children (ages three to five years old). Seventy-nine children attended Head Start in three counties. Head Start is a federally subsidized preschool for families with economic needs. Twenty-one children attended the Andy Taylor Center which is located on a college campus. 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 preschool the next day.

Introduction

My research question is, “How do family fun time activities affect family involvement?” According to the Department of Education, & Institute of Education Sciences U.S (2005), educational Activities related to school and completed with guardians have a high rate of family bonding. According to Sutterby (2017) family involvement with children's education is built outside of the home and is built through bonding and time spent together. Both of these studies prove my findings That learning and bonding help improve family involvement.

Literature Review

Parent involvement affects education

In 2008, researchers wanted to examine the correlation between parent involvement and their child's homework. The research found that those parents that help their children with homework results in the child having higher rates of homework completion, fewer homework problems, and improved academic performance in elementary school children. Cooper and Robinsons (2008) research suggests that different types of parent involvement in homework have different relationships to achievement and that the type of parent involvement changes as children move through the school grades. In 2012, researchers looked at the correlation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance. The findings from their research find both negative and positive results from parent involvement and child achievement in schools. The negative findings of parent involvement and child achievement have been called the reactive hypothesis. McNeal (2008) explains that the reactive hypothesis claims that any negative correlation or relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement stems from a reactive parent involvement strategy whereby a student having academic or behavioral difficulties at school leads to greater levels of parent involvement. The author then used a 3-panel, cross-lagged regression model to empirically investigate this claim which showed that the analysis reveals no support for the reactive hypothesis.

Parent involvement and relationships.

Child and teacher relationships are more than a relationship and can reflect on the parent's involvement in the child's life. The findings from Stromme and Helland's study (2020) show that the more parental involvement a child has the more likely they are to have a bond with their teacher. Parent involvement also has a positive correlation to parent and teacher relationships. A child that has involved parents is less likely to have teacher conflict than those with uninvolved parents. Stromme and Helland (2020) found that the amount of

parental involvement a child has in education is significant. Like Cooper and Robinsons (2008), Stromme and Helland (2020) also agree that parent involvement and relationships with others have great significance. Results from Stromme and Helland, show that parents with more cultural resources are more likely to be involved by having future educational expectations, and parents with more economic resources are more likely to be involved in their children's current schooling than those with more cultural resources.

Economic effects on Parent Involvement

A study by Lechuga-Peña, Mitchell, Lopez, and Sangalang (2019) focuses on research on low-income mothers' housing and how it affects their involvement with their children. According to Lechuga-Peña, and Sangalang (2019), low-income mothers who receive a housing choice voucher are less likely to be involved in their child's school-based activities than low-income mothers who live in a public housing project. Parent involvement barriers included frequent housing moves, and increased parent work hours. Findings suggest housing type has an important role in school-based parent involvement for low-income mothers. Additional services and resources beyond financial housing assistance are essential to improve parent involvement among low-income mothers. A child's housing growing up can have a big impact on how involved their parents are in their life. Parents that live in low-income households with parents who are stressed about money are less likely to be involved in their child's life. "Your Family, Your Neighborhood" (YFYN) is a dual-generation, skill-building intervention designed to strengthen the parent-child bond, and increase parent engagement, academic success, and health/well-being for families living in project-based subsidized housing". Stephanie and Brisson (2018), found that those low-income households that used this program increased their involvement in their child's life, which led to higher achievement in school. Through this study, they found that those low-income households that used this program increased their involvement in their child's

life, which led to higher achievement in school. The author argues that socioeconomic differences are one of the biggest factors that can affect parent involvement.

Race

Bown and Lee (2006) say that there is no certain race that has more parental involvement than another race. According to Bown and Lee (2006), parents with different demographic characteristics exhibited different types of involvement, and the types of involvement exhibited by parents from dominant groups had the strongest association with achievement. The factor that does change is the type of involvement they have with their child and their parenting style.

According to Hummer and Hamilton (2010), although most parents of all racial and ethnic groups are romantically involved at the time of their child's birth, African American women are less likely to be in a cohabiting relationship than white and Hispanic mothers. Over time, these racial and ethnic differences become more pronounced, with African American mothers having the lowest rates of marriage and cohabitation and the highest breakup rates, and Mexican immigrant mothers having the highest rates of marriage and cohabitation and the lowest breakup rates. This then has a correlation to how involved the parent is with their child and if one or two parents are raising them Hummer and Hamilton (2010).

Data And Methods

Instrument

A survey questionnaire was created by the 50 members of the Social Research and Program Evaluation team at Longwood University. The survey asked both open and close-ended questions. Items on the survey were designed to evaluate SMART objectives of five activities that were completed the previous week by Head Start and Andy Taylor Center families. Items were included that also addressed demographic information, enjoyment of the

activities, family involvement, and completion of the activities. Hard copies of the questionnaire were delivered to Head Start and the Andy Taylor Center.

Sample

The non-probability sample for this study was based on 100 children (ages three to five years old). Seventy-nine children attended Head Start in three counties. Head Start is a federally subsidized preschool for families with economic needs. Twenty-one children attended the Andy Taylor Center which is located on a college campus, and families apply and pay for their children to attend. 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 preschool the next day. Teachers sent a reminder home with children to return outstanding questionnaires. This resulted in 16 questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 16.2 % response rate.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the returned surveys was based on close-ended questions. For this study, the dependent variable is family involvement. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was, "How involved was your family throughout the activity?". The answer choices for this item were "Scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount)". For this study, the independent variable was household income on family involvement. This will be measured through the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

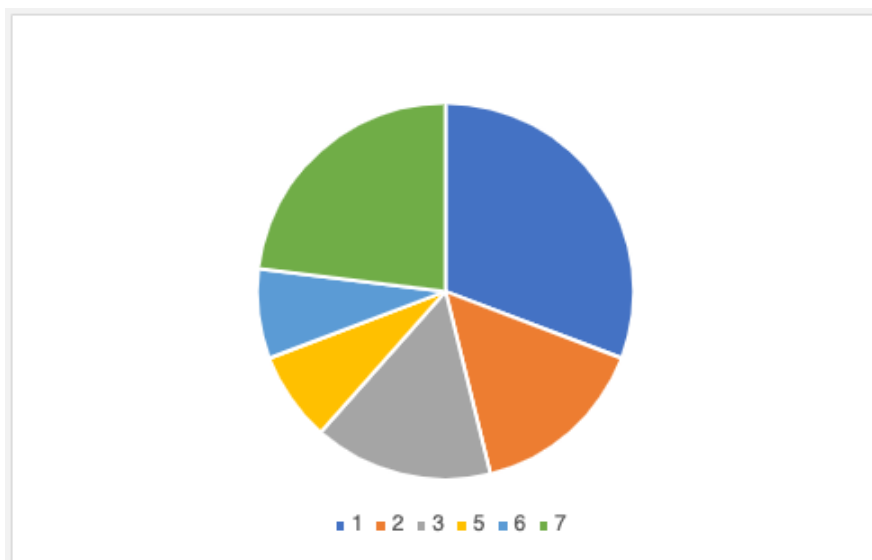
Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the returned surveys was based on open-ended questions. The open-ended questions on the survey were, "Did your family complete this activity?", "Was your child able to identify five shapes in the activity? (Shapes included triangle, circle, square, rectangle, and hexagon)?", "During the activity, did you talk with your child about

what pizza toppings they liked”, “Did you talk with your child about what pizza toppings they disliked?”. To answer the research question “How do family fun time activities affect family involvement?”. Inductive open coding was used to determine recurring themes in the respondent's responses.

Findings

For this study, the dependent variable is family involvement. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was, “How involved was your family throughout the activity?”. The answer choices were coded by a “Scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount)”. The mean of my dependent variable is 8.14. The standard deviation for this variable is 2.56. For this study, the independent variable was household income on family involvement. My graph shows that four families answered less than \$10,000, and two families answered \$10,000-\$30,999, two families answered \$31,000-\$50,999, one family answered \$51,000-\$70,999, one family answered \$91,000 or more, and three families preferred not to answer.



When we compare the independent and dependent variables we find to see that the mean is influenced. The mean for respondents that answered less than \$10,000 was 9.25. The mean for respondents that answered \$10,000-\$30,999 was 10.00. The mean for respondents that

answered \$31,000-\$50,999 was 8.50. The mean for those that answered \$51,000-\$70,999 was 10.00. The mean for those that answered \$71,000-\$90,999 was 10.00. The mean that answered prefer not to say was 9.00. The families with the lowest family involvement were those with an income of \$31,000-\$50,999. For respondents that answered having an income of \$10,000-\$30,999, \$51,000-\$70,999, and \$71,000-\$90,999 all had the same mean of 10.00.

Bonding

Survey 9 respondents and survey 10 said their favorite thing from the activity was doing it together with family members. Survey respondent 15 states “we enjoyed making finger friends the most. Spending time together doing something educational is always fun”. Survey respondent 3 stated that they enjoyed how simple the activities were and that they completed them with siblings. Survey 4 stated they enjoyed spending time together, talking, and learning.

Learning

All the families completed the activity. Families stated that their children learned something from completing the activity. Children learned patience and bonded with the family according to respondent 15. Survey 11 states the child learned colors, shapes, and emotions. In survey 2, respondents said they learned how to cut and glue. Survey 4 states that the child learned to be patient and it helped them with their mood. These learning themes show us that through family fun time activities, children are learning new things with their families.

Recommendations

Recommendation from survey 12, includes making activities “more hands-on for the family to make together.” Survey 11 recommends “spreading out the activities so they are not back to back”. Out of all 16 surveys, 7 people wrote recommendations while 9 wrote that they have no recommendations. A recommendation made by survey 15 was to have activities with

fewer instructions. These recommendations will help us to find ways to improve family involvement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, bonding, and learning correlates with my research question on how it affects family involvement. Based on my research, household income and family involvement do not have a correlation with how involved the family is with their child. Our main findings from these family involvement activities include family bonding time, enjoyment, learning new skills, and simplicity of the activities. These themes were all findings throughout the activities.

Resources

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