**How Do Family Fun Time Activities affect Family Involvement?**

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**Abstract**

The topic of this study is how family involvement affects learning. The purpose of the study was to use different children’s activities to find out how family fun time activities affect family involvement. The researchers have decided to have our participants be students from the Head Start program and the Andy Tayler center. This research was conducted in Farmville, Virginia, and studied results from a survey given out to 99 students from each school (78 students from Head Start and 21 from the Andy Taylor center). We used these surveys to collect data on different factors of family. This is a mixed methods study and was used to collect qualitative data. For that, I will be examining the different themes that can be found in each survey. For quantitative data, I will be examining family involvement and how the parent’s level of education affects involvement in these activities. For qualitative data I believed that we will be able to find a high rate of family involvement on the surveys as a result of the activities provided to these families. For the quantitative data, I believe that we will find themes of enjoyment, learning, and family involvement. For the qualitative data, I believe we will see good results for the questions regarding family involvement and enjoyment. For practical implications of this study, I think that these surveys will positively impact parent involvement because these activities will help families bond and build stronger connections which in turn will increase family involvement that can benefit the child’s learning in the future.

**Introduction**

The research problem at hand is that we would like to figure out how family fun time activities affect family involvement and how that could benefit children’s learning. This issue has been a researched for many years and there are answers for it. There are some existing studies that address this research problem such as a study by Robinson and Harris (2014)which discusses different factors that relate to parent involvement and how it affects children’s education, andAytac, Demirbas-Celik, and Kiracioglu (2019)conducted is a study that wanted to prove that family involvement benefits a child’s ability to learn. The research we conducted will help further the study, but since it is a survey, it could come with certain deficiencies such as parents filling it out only because they feel like they have to, and not because they want to, and that could possibly result in skewed data. The significance of the study is so we can further the research regarding how family involvement benefits a child’s learning experience, and this will be done using fun learning activities. The purpose of this study is to use different children’s activities to find out how family fun time activities affect family involvement. This study was conducted in Farmville, Virginia with 99 students from the Head Start program and Andy Taylor center (78 from the Head Start program, and 21 from the Andy Taylor center). And from the survey responses, we found that family involvement does improve childrens learning.

**Literature Review**

**Effectiveness of family involvement activities in pre-school education.**

For the methodology, this study was done in a post-test experimental control group pattern. The primary finding of the article is that family involvement is indeed beneficial to a child’s ability to learn new things. One question that I gained from this resource was “How does this change after a child is finished with pre-school?”. Primary concepts or ideas relevant to this research project is that this article examines how family involvement affects pre-school education (Aytac et al., 2019).

**Parent and Family Involvement in Education**

This study by Hanson, Pugliese, and Grady (2019) examined factors such as calls about the student’s performance and e-mails about the student’s performance. The primary finding was that family involvement results in better academic performance overall. Something that could cause errors in this study is the fact that the study has that different variations in the samples could cause errors in the data. The primary concept of the article that relates to the research topic is that it shows data on how family involvement affects students from K-12.

**The impact of parental involvement and education on academic achievement in elementary school.**

In order to collect data for the study, researchers administered a survey that randomly sent through the mail to 14,075 parents (Avnet et al., 2019). The primary finding was that high parental involvement can result in a child achieving higher grades. I couldn’t quite find anything wrong with this article. The primary idea that relates this study to the main research topic is that it focuses on how parental involvement affects academic achievement in elementary school.

**Head Start Centers can Influence Healthy Behaviors: Evaluation of a Nutrition and Physical Activity Educational Intervention**

The main research question for this study is “Does having a healthy diet lead to developing healthy habits?”. The methodology used by the researchers was to ask to recognize different fruits and vegetables. The primary finding to the study was that the activity can be used to help children develop healthier habits overall. The one criticism I have on the study is that it is not 100% effective in convincing children to adapt a healthy diet. The main concept that I found that relates to the main research topic is that this study describes how the Head Start program also teaches children about having a healthy diet to help them develop healthy habits. This study does not directly relate to the question we are trying to answer, but it gives us an insight as to the different learning programs that the Head Start centers provide.

**A program review of Head Start and Elementary School Hearing Screenings**

The primary research question conducted for this study was “What are some obstacles that could hinder a child’s learning?” (Hurley et al., 2020). To do this, they wanted to test children’s hearing. They conducted the research by administering a hearing screening to students. The primary finding was that children who were enrolled in Head Start had a high rate of passing the screening. The one criticism with this study is that there is a possibility that children with auditory disorders might be overlooked. One concept that I found that relates to the main research topic is that this study analyzes data from hearing screening programs from different Head Start Centers.

**Parental Engagement and Early Childhood Education Around the World**

(Garvis et al., 2021) wanted to analyze the question “How important is parental engagement in early childhood education?”. The methodology used in the study was to analyze the different factors of education in 25 different countries (Garvis et al., 2021). The primary finding was that different countries had different methods of education and levels of parental involvement. The concept from this study that relates to the research topic is that it explores the importance of parental engagement in early childhood education.

**The Broken Compass: Parental Involvement with Children’s Education**

This resource is a book that wanted to examine how parental involvement directly relates to children learning different things. In the book, Robinson (2014) used different factors such as socioeconomic status and overall education involvement to learn more about the topic. The primary finding of the resource is that parental involvement may not play much of a role in a child’s ability to learn. The concept that connects this book to my initial research topic is that it discusses the different outcomes of a child’s education when parental involvement is present.

**Parental Involvement and Academic Success**

Jeynes (2010) conducted a study by formulating the question “What can parents do to maximize the education of students?”. The research was done by analyzing different types of students and how parental involvement affected their education. The primary finding was that parental involvement is a key aspect in a child’s ability to learn. The concept that relates this book to the initial research topic is the idea that parental involvement is important to children’s education.

**Data and Methodology**

**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 closed-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 99 children (ages three to five years old). Seventy-eight children attend 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 the 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 guardian taking the survey must provide an answer on a scale of 0-10 for this question. For this study, the independent variable is education. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was “What is the highest degree of education anyone in your household has completed?” The answer choices for this item were: Less than High School, High School, Some College, College degree or higher, and Prefer not to answer. 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, “What did your family enjoy most about these activities? Why?”, “What did your child learn from these activities?”, and “What recommendations would you suggest to make these activities better?” To answer the research question “How does Family Fun Time Activities affect Family Involvement?”, inductive open coding was used to determine reoccurring themes in the respondents’ responses.

**Qualitative Findings**

After sending out activities and surveys to Andy Taylor and Head Start Program students, we were able to collect qualitative data on these specific activities and learned more to help answer the original research question which is: “How does Family Fun Time Activities affect Family Involvement?”. We were able to analyze 16 surveys collected data from them. Many themes can be found in the data sets collected from the survey responses. The main three that I have found in the surveys are Enjoyment, Learning, and Family involvement.

For enjoyment, there are many quotes that can be found in the different surveys. Five out of the 16 surveys had direct quotes about how much each family enjoyed these activities. Survey 3 expressed their enjoyment by saying “Our family really enjoyed how simple the activities were and how much our child enjoyed them”. Survey 4 said “We both enjoyed them”. This relates to the response for survey 5 and how much families enjoy these activities by stating that “It’s fun when you want to do something fun and enjoyable for kids and family”. The response for survey 7 was “We enjoyed putting all different shapes together on the pizza survey”. Survey 15 responded stating their enjoyment and mentioned their favorite out of all the activities by saying “We enjoyed making the finger friends the most”. From the quotes given by the respondents, we can conclude that these activities helped them enjoy doing activities together and that these activities were fun. Most, if not all, of the responses to the open-ended question “What did your family enjoy most about these activities”, included a mention of family bonding.

Learning is another common theme found in the surveys. Six out of the 16 different survey responses had direct quotes about their learning experiences. Survey 16 stated that they “Enjoyed the learning outcomes”. Survey 4 said that they enjoyed the “Time spent together, the talks, learning”. Survey 7 said that “My child learned how to be creative”. Survey 2 stated that “[Child] learn how to cut and glue, and how to trace better”. Survey 15 said that “Spending time together doing something educational is always fun. Survey 5 talked about how “It can be a learning skill but fun for the kids”. From the quotes provided by the respondents, we can conclude that these activities were a great way to learn while also having fun with family. These surveys were given to the Andy Taylor Center and Head Start Program students so hearing about their learning experience is a great thing because these types of activities are a fun way to learn.

The final theme that can be found in the survey results is Family involvement. The best quotes for this topic can be found in five of the 16 surveys. Survey 4 expressed their enjoyment about their “Time spent together”. Survey 1 said that these activities were “A free convenient activity to do as a family”. This relates to the response given by the family in survey 3 “Family really enjoyed how simple the activities were and how much our child enjoyed them”. The response in survey 5 stated that these activities were “Enjoyable for kids and family”. Survey 10’s response to the open-ended question was “[Child] says she loves doing things with mom and dad”. In survey 9, the parent stated that the one thing that they enjoyed the most about the activities was “Doing them together”. These quotes and the theme were probably the most important to the data set because it can really help us answer the initial research question. Many of the respondents stated how they enjoyed the activities because it was a fun family bonding and learning experience. The open-ended questions provided at the beginning of the surveys helps us see the feedback on the surveys and it also shows possible revisions that can be made in the future to make the activities better. By making these activities better, we can make sure that these families do not find obstacles while doing them so they can focus on spending time doing fun activities with their kids. These findings show that the activities provided to these families served their purpose as a learning tool and that it also contributed to enjoyable family fun time.

**Quantitative Findings**

My dependent variable is family involvement. It is coded on a 0-10 scale. The mean for the dependent variable is 8.5 and the standard deviation for this variable is 2.14. My independent variable is education. 50% was high school, 29% said some college, and 21% have a college degree or higher (See figure 1). The mean for each response on the survey question “What is the highest degree of education anyone in your household has completed?” showed that the parents who only completed high school is 7.3, the mean is 9.75 for those who completed some college, and the mean from those who have a college degree or higher is 8.6. From the data, we can conclude that the parents who completed some college are the ones who rated the highest amount of family involvement, and those who completed just high school rated the lowest amount of family involvement. There were no big gaps between the rates of family involvement between each level of education, so it is safe to assume that regardless of education, family involvement in these activities were still high.

Figure

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I believe that the data we were able to collect supports our initial research question. The main idea of the research was to examine how family fun time activities affect family involvement. This was done by sending out surveys to 99 Head Start and Andy Taylor students for their parents to complete and collecting the data from each returned survey. The main quantitative findings showed that level of education had little to no effect on how involved a parent is with their child’s education, and that the overall rate of family involvement based on the survey scale is 8.5. The results were from a 0-10 scale on the survey and so the average rate of involvement is good. For the qualitative findings, we were able to find themes of enjoyment, learning, and family involvement, which are all things that are very beneficial to the study. Learning and family involvement are the two themes that matter the most, but enjoyment is also very important because we want to make sure that these families had fun while doing the activities, so we get better results. Overall, the data shows that family involvement is beneficial because family involvement plays a significant role in a child’s ability to learn, and that is because children need motivation and support in order to better their overall learning experience.

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