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STATUS OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION OF WORKING COUPLES (WC) IN TAMILNADU, INDIA

S.Tamilenthi [1]*, K.Mohanasundaram [2] and V.Padmini [3]

[1]Research scholar, Dept. of. Education Dravidian University, Kuppam , Andrapradesh.
[2]Professor and Head, Dept. of Education, Tamil university, Thanjavur.
[3]Assist.professor, Dept.of Chemistry, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai.
Corresponding author e-mail: rst_edu2011@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper investigates the determinants of education of the children, parents working status and to allocate the time to their children. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to answer research questions. Qualitative data were collected June 02-28, 2010 (single parent father or mother working) and March 01-20, 2011 (Both working parents) through in-depth interviews with 50 working couples in Madurai and Chennai. The couples had children ages five to 10 years old. Trained interviewers used a set of common topics to guide their discussions. The supervisor reviewed the questionnaires daily and re-interviewed some of the respondents the next day to ensure the quality of the data collection. An implication of our findings is that any policy aiming both at enhancing children's education and increasing children's welfare should also target improvements in future society.

Keywords: children's education, working couples, allocation of time, India

Introduction

We are not of course the first authors to do so, notwithstanding our comments on the thrust of the literature to date. A number of papers have produced important insights into the different strengths of the parent-child links, motivated in particular by the desire to distinguish the role of parents in education.

Although there has been considerable research on how parents influence children's development, less is known about the specific ways in which parents socialise their children in terms of school-related behaviours. While extensive research indicates that there are important Links between parenting and children's academic and competence at school, there is less research on "academic status", which is conceptualized as the variety of parental beliefs and behaviours that influence children's education related development. Various definitions of parent involvement have been proposed. It can be defined broadly as parental behaviour with, or on behalf of children, at home or at school, as well as the expectations that parents hold for children's future education (Reynolds & Clements, 2005)defined parent involvement through four constructs—home discussion, home supervision, school communication and school participation.

Study Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study was to examine the level of achievement, competency, learning attitude and behavioral outcomes of the child. Specifically, investigators wanted to know if not having adequate time on their children's education which may lead in future are predicted:

1. Less care on child education compared to child with single working father/mother.
2. Negative effects on academic performance of the child.
3. Negative effect on education of the child and on employment of the parent.

4. Comparative study of working single parent's contribution and working both parent's contribution towards their children's education.

5. To find out the correlation if any between the variables.

In addition, researchers wanted to know if these effects varied by Locality, Level/Status of employment, Type of a family and number of children.

Conceptual Issues and a Review of the Literature

Child education is universally acknowledged as one of the prerequisites of human development. Although there is less agreement on the role of labour for women, its empowering function is hardly denied. In fact, it is generally thought that women who contribute to household resources have a higher command of them, since earnings from their own work should represent an easier resource to control (Desai and Jain, 1994).

"Children in affluent homes are bathed in financial and cognitive resources…..More educated women marry later, have more resources, fewer children, and provide much richer child rearing environments that produce dramatic differences in child vocabulary and intellectual performance." (Heckman 2008)

Evidence drawn from a model where children's schooling and mothers' work are treated as interdependent phenomena has revealed that, in India, children of working mothers have a lower probability of schooling and a higher probability of working (Francavilla and Giannelli, 2007).

Engaging families in the education of their children at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better learning outcomes for children. When schools and families work together, children have higher achievement in school and stay in school longer (Reynolds & Clements, 2005). Although there has been considerable research on how parents influence children's development, less is known about the specific ways in which parents socialise their children in terms of school-related behaviours. While extensive research indicates that there are important links between parenting and children's academic and behavioural competence at school, there is less research on "academic socialisation", which is conceptualized as the variety of parental beliefs and behaviours that influence children's school-related development (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004, p. 163).

A greater appreciation of the beliefs that underlie parents' decisions about becoming involved in their children's education is needed (Taylor et al., 2004). The way in which parents feel about schools and the emotional connections that they had to school may influence the kinds of attitudes to school and learning that their children assume. These feelings may be positive or negative, depending on the nature of those previous experiences. Negative feelings about school may prevent parents from making connections with their children's schools. Positive feelings about school experiences are likely to enhance parental involvement. Additionally, the expectations that parents hold for their children's future achievement are important. If parents expect high levels of academic achievement and commitment to schooling, the child is more likely to adopt these positive attitudes (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Parents' communication with schools and parental involvement are also influenced by school characteristics (Feuerstein, 2001). Schools play a strong role in determining the level and nature of parental involvement. Critical factors include teachers' beliefs about parents' role in the classroom and their responsibility to provide involvement opportunities to parents. Schools can help parents become involved by offering a range of options for engagement. Supporting parental involvement requires knowledge by teachers on how to involve parents, as well as leadership and support from the school administration. Kerbow and Bernhardt (1993) noted that some schools seem to have more ability than others to promote parent involvement. Schools can help parents decide to be involved by offering a range of options for interactions that take parental needs into account.

Invitations to parents to be involved convey to parents that their involvement is welcome and valued and provide motivation to be involved. Important invitations come from three sources: the school, teachers, and children themselves (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Cardoso et al. (2010) use the data set of France, Italy and Germany to analyze the relationship of time allocation and its influence between parents

and children. They find out that parents' time allocation and their behaviour affect their children directly. Parents' preferences and net work are transmitted to their children because of the status of parents as role models.

A very important paper related to ours is that of Bloemen et al. (2008). They analyze the time allocation by Italian couples on weekdays and at weekends. They find that more highly educated couples spend more time with their children. Women's time allocation does not have much influence in terms of their husband's characteristics. They also check the residual correlation and find that childcare time is complementary and housework time is substitutable.

Finally, Gimenez-Nadal and Sevilla-Sanz (2010) analyze data for many Western European countries and find that working mothers enjoy much less leisure than working fathers and singles, which leads to less satisfaction about working mothers' free time.

Perhaps the most influential work on the correlation between family structure and children's outcomes is McLanahan and Sandefur [1994]. They find that children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families have lower educational attainment than those who grow up with both biological parents. The estimated correlations depend on the control variables used in the regression. After controlling for mother's employment and occupatio n, Biblarz and Raftery [1999] find that children living with both biological parents and a single- mother have higher occupational status and educational attainment than children living with a stepparent or children living with a single father. Wojtkiewicz (1993) and Boggess (1998) find a negative and significant correlation between living with a stepfather and children's educational attainment.

Bloemen et al.(2008), who analyze time allocation by Italian couples. However, the two exercises are not strictly comparable given that their sample contains all couples, including those who do not work. They find that when husbands devote more time to work, wives would like to spend more time on housework and childcare. However, for our couples in full-time work we find that if husbands work more, then wives also work more. Thus, when husbands increase their paid work time wives will also increase their paid work time but decrease the time that they allocate to housework and childcare. An explanation for this phenomenon might be that the couple may hire someone else to handle the non-childcare housework and childcare when they are both busy.

Study Design

Both qualitative and quantitative data of 96 samples were collected from Madurai and Chennai in June 02-28, 2010 (single parent - father or mother working)and out 96 samples 52 samples have become both parent working in March 01-20,2011 and again 2 samples discarded since they work as part-time finally reached 50 samples. The couples had children ages five to 10 years old. Trained interviewers used a set of common topics to guide their discussions. The questions focused on demographic characteristics of working couples with prenatal care.

The questionnaire used for the survey was carried out with 5 dimensons in addition to Demographic information. The dimensions are 1) Care on child education 2) Health care on self and child. 3) House hold works contribution. 4) The ways time to spend with child. 5) Child involvement and contribution in the House hold work. Each dimension has 10 questions with rating scale maximum of 4 points and the maximum score is 200.

Questionnaire items were pre-tested in May, 2010 with a sample of 10 couples and necessary revisions were made in the questionnaire items prior to study initiation.

Survey data were collected within each governorate by six teams of four female interviewers and one supervisor. Interviewers participated in a three-day training workshop. Two interviewers worked in Chennai and Madurai sample area. The supervisor reviewed the questionnaires at the week end and re-interviewed some of the respondents in the following week to ensure the quality of the data collection. Survey data were entered into computer MS Excel and SPSS was used to analyze data. Most data are descriptive, presented in tables as percentages by relevant variables: Location of residence, Level of employment status and child's gender.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Status of children's education of WC with reference to Locality, Level/Status of employment, Type of a family ,Number of children ,parents education, family income and type of organization.

Group	Type	N (50)	Mean	Std. Deviation	t –Value	P
Locality	Staff quarters	14	153.46	17.66	0.789 NS	0.431
	Private quarters	36	154.79	17.51		
Level of employment	Admn/Higher position	21	153.37	17.07	0.350 NS	0.726
	Below admn/Higher position	29	154.14	17.72		
Type of family	Nuclear	11	155.02	17.20	2.28*	0.023
	Separate	39	150.422	18.55		
Number of children	Up to 2	36	155.42	16.84	2.650**	0.008
	Above 2	14	150.58	18.92		
Parent's education	Below Graduate	34	158.48	21.31	1.133 NS	0.258
	Above Graduate	16	160.81	21.29		
Yearly income of the family (Rs)	Up to 1,00,000	29	161.64	20.60	3.421**	0.001
	Above 1,00,000	21	154.10	22.13		
Job Organization	Govt.	18	153.61	21.93	2.276*	0.023
	Private	32	147.81	23.05		

* significant at 0.05 level , ** significant at 0.01 level.

1. The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for the staff quarters and private quarters of the locality of Children's stay. It is concluded that the staff quarters and private quarters of the locality of children do not differ in their education.
2. The 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for the Admn/Higher position and Below admn/Higher position of the Level of employment of parents. It is concluded that the position of the employment of parents do not differ in their children's education.
3. The calculated't' value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that the type of family with Nuclear and Separate differ in their children's education. The WC with Separate family set up is at higher level than the Nuclear in their children's education.

4. The calculated't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the WC family having up to 2 children and above 2 children in their family differ in their children's education. The family of WC having Above 2 children and their education is higher level than having Up to 2 children in their family.
5. The't' value is not significant at 0.05 level for the Below Graduate and Above Graduate of the WC's education. It is concluded that the education level of the Parent's do not differ in their children's education.
6. The calculated't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that Up to Rs.1, 00,000 and Above Rs. 1, 00,000 in their family differ in their children's education. The family of WC having the income of up to Rs.1, 00,000 is higher level than above Rs.1, 00,000 in their children's education.
7. The calculated't' value is significant at 0.05 level of significance for the Job Organization of Government and Private. It is concluded that the work Organization of the parent differ in their children's education. The WC in the Government is at higher level than the private in their children's education.

Table 2. The Correlation between Locality, Level/Status of employment, Type of family, Number of children, Parents education level, single parent working and both parent working with children's education of WC

Variable	N	r	P
Locality Vs children's education of WC.	50	0.832**	0.00
Level/Status of employment Vs children's education of WC.	50	0.786**	0.00
Type of family Vs children's education of WC.	50	0.692 **	0.00
Number of children Vs children's education of WC	50	0.786**	0.00
Number of children Vs children's education of WC	50	0.692 **	0.00
Parents education level Vs children's education of WC	50	0.832**	0.00
single parent working Vs children's education of WC	96	0.692 **	0.00
Both parent working Vs children's education of WC	50	0.786**	0.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The Pearson correlation is significant at 0.01 levels, for the Locality, Level/Status of employment, Type of family, Number of children, Parents education level, single parent working and both parent working with children's education of WC. That is there is a positive, significant relationship between these variables and children's education of WC.

Findings of the study

1. The findings of these exploratory analyses reveals that staff quarters and private quarters of the locality of children do not differ in their education.
2. The analyses reported the position of the employment of parents do not differ in their children's education.
3. The analysis reveals that WC with Separate family set up is at higher level than the Nuclear in their children's education.
4. It also noticed that the family of WC having Above 2 children and their education is higher level than having Up to 2 children in their family.
5. It is found that the education level of the Parent's do not differ in their children' education.
6. The data shows that the family of WC having the income of up to Rs.1,00,000 are higher level in education than above Rs.1,00,000 in their children's education.
7. It is also found that the work organization of the parent differ in their children's education. The WC in the Government is at higher level than the private in their children's education.

Recommendations

1. The government should make the suitable policy to promote the children's of W.C in the private organization.
2. Additional increments and financial benefits to the W.C for their children when they met any achievements.
3. Government may open the evening care schools or children's education center with their own running costs in order to have effective discharge of work.
4. Each organization must be encouraged to establish the educational Institutions in order to cater their children s education.
5. Financial assistance /Income tax relaxation may be regulated those parents whose son / daughter who is on studies.

Conclusion

This continuing trend will rely in part upon more working couples being in work too. Improved in work support through tax exemptions on child education, better childcare and government policy will all contribute to this target.

The report suggests that policy initiatives to address high income family will continue to be an important part of the package to increase the level of education.

The most prominent barrier among the relatively few out of working couples were their work burden in the office they could not spend time with their children as the result the poor performance in the children's education.

The Performance of child education

The performance of child education is based on these factors which has given in Fig (1).

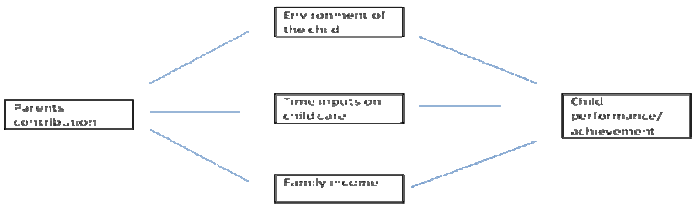

Fig 1. Performance of child in education

It is noticed that the higher and administrative group of parents do not spend much time (parents abilities) on their children's education as they intent to relax in their mind as the result they join with their children for entertainment only and for studies they depend on other source for child education (Fig.1).

Based on the research reports parents are the main contributors of child's growth on education in view of creation suitable environment, time spending on health care and general and ability to earn adequate money this all lead to child's performance/achievement in education.

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