Title: Parental Involvement and Students’ Outcomes: A Study in a Special Education (SPED) School in Singapore

Authors: Eulisia Er Si Yi (Singapore)

Introduction: Parents play a pivotal role in their children’s education (Lendrum, Barlow, & Humphrey, 2015). Parental involvement (PI) is associated with a range of student outcomes, including academic achievement, socioemotional development, adaptive skills, and school attendance (Byrne & Smyth, 2010; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). Numerous studies have found that levels of PI are significantly influenced by socioeconomic status (SES; Bartel, 2010; Bellibas & Gumus, 2013; Brown & Beckett, 2007) and Family Structure (Fishman & Nickerson, 2014; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Families with higher SES displayed an increased involvement in ensuring their children’s success at school (Bellibas & Gumus, 2013; N Vellymalay, 2011). Additionally, nuclear biologically-married two-parent families demonstrate higher levels of PI as compared to single parent families (Myers & Myers, 2014). Extended families (relatives living with two-parent families) may also compensate for the absence of one or both parents and contribute additional resources to the household which include income, emotional support, or parenting advice (Furstenberg & Crawford, 1978; SmithBattle, 1996). However, SES and family structure are not the only factors associated with educational outcomes. Instead, PI should be viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon (Fan & Chen, 2001; N Vellymalay, 2011).

This study is the first in Singapore to (1) explore the relationship between parental involvement and educational outcomes in students with developmental disabilities; (2) determine the effects of family structure and socioeconomic status (SES) on parental involvement and (3) investigate factors that inform involvement in parents of children with specific developmental disabilities. Approval for the study was obtained from Nanyang Technological University’s Institutional Review Board in Singapore. The revised version of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2005) comprehensive theoretical model on parental involvement was used as the theoretical framework in this study.

Method: In view of the aforementioned hypothesis, descriptive statistics were computed separately for each statistical analysis as follow. Then, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of SES and family structure on parental involvement. Subsequently, a series of standard multiple regressions were conducted to assess the extent to which family demographic variables and parent motivational variables predicted parental involvement. Finally, in light of the results from the two-way ANOVA and multiple regression analyses, Pearson’s product moment correlation was used to determine the association of parental involvement and educational outcomes in students with developmental disabilities.

Results: Pearson correlation coefficients between parental involvement and educational outcomes of students with developmental disabilities were significant. There was a statistically significant interaction between SES and Family Structure on parental involvement, \( F(2, 145) = 3.229, p = .002\), partial \( \eta^2 = .043 \). Following the significant interaction between variables SES and Family Structure, main effect analyses and simple effect analyses were performed. There was a statistically significant difference in mean score between Low SES and High SES families with an extended-parent family structure, \( F(1, 145) = 8.753, p < .025\), partial \( \eta^2 = .057 \). For extended-parent families, families with Low SES had a statistically significantly higher mean score than families with High SES, 13.56, 95% CI [4.50, 22.62], \( p < .025 \). The multiple regression model as a whole explained a total of 56.5% of the variance with statistically significantly predicted scores, \( F(10, 140) = 18.15, p < .001, R^2 = .565 \). Perceptions of Teacher Invitations was the strongest predictor, explaining 9.18% of the variance of parental involvement.

Discussion: Although Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s Model of Parent Involvement (2005) does not include all possible variables that may contribute to a parent’s involvement, it provides a framework for understanding the relationship between parents and their children. Taken as a whole, the findings suggest that parents of students with developmental disabilities are influenced by multiple, complex factors when being involved with their children. As such, these parents may require more than financial assistance to encourage their involvement. Schools and their staff may help to increase PI by sending specific, direct invitations, building parent’ self-efficacy and instilling a greater level of responsibility in their children’s education and by encouraging children to do the same.

References/Citations (from Full Paper):


