

The Influence of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Their Involvement at Home

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the relationship between parent's socioeconomic status and parental involvement strategies in their child's education among Jordanian parents who have enrolled their children in governmental schools. The total sample of the present study was 150 Jordanian students who completed their (Tawjeehi) education at governmental schools. The sampling design is based on purposive convenient method. A questionnaire technique was used to obtain quantitative data related to parental socioeconomic background and their involvement strategies in their children education from the selected parents. The results revealed that regardless of parental socioeconomic status the found to be involved in their children education. However, the educational level of the parents has greater impact on parental involvement strategies than parental occupation and income. As a result, the study provides findings and suggestions that can inform future research, family care agencies, educational institutions, social work agencies and interventions to the important of parental involvement and their role in helping their children to have better education.

Keywords: Influence; Parental involvement; Socioeconomic.

Introduction

Parents are one of the most important and influential elements on the lives of their children. They have the power, ability to shape, sustain and develop their children's who will be interested, creative and tolerant, through their positive involvement in the learning process and educational activities. On the other hand parents who do not involve in their children educational process are also considered to be capable of repressing and destroying the motivation and ability of their children through neglect and indifference to their achievements.

Parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance(Desforges &Abouchaar,2003).

"A child's capability to succeed in school depends on how successfully the child is managed by his /her parents in the home environment. It is an environment where the child learns the skills, attitudes and behavior which could mould them into a productive and successful student. However, not every child comes from a home that could provide them with the requisite educational resources necessary for their academic success. In accordance with that, a parent's socioeconomic status plays an important role in providing these educational resources and it appears to impose the greatest impact on the child's educational outcomes"(Vellymalay, 2012a).

Socioeconomic status has a relatively strong impact on parental involvement compared to other factors. However, there is a question as to how far the strength of the parent's socioeconomic status could inspire a child to achieve academic success. Parental involvement has a positive impact on student achievement at all socioeconomic levels, though involvement is probably more important for low socioeconomic schools, as they are more likely to have lower test scores and graduation rates.

"Regardless of income, ethnicity or background, students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, have better attitudes, behavior and attendance, and graduate and go onto additional education. Higher parental involvement is associated with higher educational expectations, enrollment in gifted and talented programs, and positive perceptions of school"(Henderson, 1988).

While parent involvement positively affects a student's academic achievement, low Socioeconomic families are least likely to be involved in their students' education (Turney & Kao, 2009; Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009; Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007; Machen, Wilson, & Notar, 2005; Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006). Low Socioeconomic families are often working all of the time to take care of their families, and they have no time to participate in their child's education on campus (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). Based on a study involving low socioeconomic mothers, mothers want to be involved in their child's education, but the other problem is that they are less comfortable around teachers, and so they do not get involved (Machen, Wilson, & Notar, 2005).

Recent educational developments in many countries have shown a growing importance of the concept of parental involvement. With the rise in educational fields, the wealth and wishes of parents appear to play a more dominant role in a child's education. Thus, the impact of the parent's socioeconomic status on parental involvement and their child's educational achievement has been of great concern to many researchers especially in the field of sociology (Vellymalay, 2012b). The present study focuses on the relationship between parent's socioeconomic status and parental involvement strategies in their child's education among Jordanian parents who have enrolled their children in governmental schools.

1. Literature Review

To date, many studies have established the effect of parent's socioeconomic status on parental involvement. The influence of parent's socioeconomic status on parental involvement has been well documented in explaining how the socioeconomic level of parents is translated into their child's school achievement. Research in parent involvement, (Midraj & Midraj, 2011) shows that involvement at home has a more significant impact on children's attainment than parent involvement in school activities. (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999; Trusty, 1999). Olaniyi & Mageshni (2008) studies shows that, Parental involvement positively correlated with students' academic achievement. Children of parents involved in the home-based learning support activities and direct communication with their children had superior school grades than those from less involved parents. Kingsley (2011) carried out a study to analyze the link between parental school involvement and the academic achievement of young students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds between the ages of (15 and 20), the results indicate a positive and significant correlation between mothers' school involvement and the academic achievement of the students.

Parental involvement in school activities may have a positive influence on children's learning and cognitive growth. Research found that when families who were not very involved in their children's school became more involved in the school, their children's literacy improved (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins & Weiss, 2006). Moreover, Xu et al. (2010) found that parental involvement at school positively affected self regulated learning of fifth graders. Moosa, Karabenick and Adams' (2001), research results showed that Arab parents believe that they can assist their children with school if given guidance, and Arab mothers favored more personal forms of parental involvement than public forms (Midraj & Midraj, 2011). Singh & Vinod (2012) carried out a study aims to find out the extent of relationship between academic achievement and parental encouragement. The representative sample of 400 higher secondary school students 200 male students and 200 female students were taken by using simple random sampling technique. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and parental encouragement.

Many research's shows that parents' involvement in their children's education is an important component of student success and achievement (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Lareau, 2000; Shields, Gordon, & Dupree, 1983; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Greenwood and Hickman (1991) study shows that parental involvement enhances child's educational aspirations, sense of well-being, attitude, improving grades and readiness for school. Several other studies indicate that parent/family involvement has a lasting effect throughout the K-12 educational careers of students (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993; Trusty, 1999). Simon (1999) found that although study habits, attitudes, and behavior patterns may be set by a student's senior year, an adolescent's success is influenced by his or her family even through the last year of high school.

In addition, Anderson, (2000) observed that parental involvement decreases the likelihood that students will be placed in special education, repeat a grade, and or drop out. Other studies have found that parental involvement increases student motivation (Gonzales-Haas, Willems & Doan Holbein, 2005) and decreases instances of behavioral problems (Domina, 2005).

However, other studies have demonstrated that low- socioeconomic status parents are just as eager to help their children succeed in school as their higher-socioeconomic status counterparts (Lareau,2000; Compton-Lilly, 2003).

Fan& Chen, (2001), conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize the quantitative literature concerning the relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement. Their findings revealed a "moderate and practically meaningful" relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. Parental aspiration/expectation for children's educational achievement was the strongest relationship, while parental home supervision was the weakest. Parents' attitudes and support for their children's learning influence performance on literacy tests irrespective of socio-economic status (Tizard, Blatchford, Burke, Farquhar and Plewis, 1988; Wells, 1987). Parental involvement in their child's literacy practices positively affects children's academic performance (Fan and Chen, 2001) and is a more powerful force for academic success than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Flouri and Buchanan, 2004).

2. Methodology

Sample

The present study was confined to The Influence of Parental Socioeconomic Status on their Involvement at Home. The sampling design is based on purposive convenient method. The total sample of the present study was 150 Jordanian students. Their age-ranging from 17-19 years and were drawn from schools scattered in the three regions in Jordan that is the northern, the middle and the southern regions. They were just completed high secondary school (12th class) from governmental schools and were chosen for the purpose of this study and divided in to three group; The first one is comprised of fifty students from scientific course, the second one is fifty students from arts course and the third on is comprised of fifty students from information technology course. Of the fifty students that have been chosen from each course, twenty students were from the lowest achievement category and thirty others were from the highest achievement category, and they were identified based on the governmental general secondary school examination results. From the 150 students who were chosen, one parent for each student was selected (according to the student's view about the individual who spends the most time being involved in their education) to be the respondent for this study. So that to get an explanation about the parent's background and their involvement in their child's education.

Instrument

In this study the questionnaire technique was used by the researcher based on previous literature to obtain quantitative data from the selected parents. Questions were adapted from Walker, et al., (2005); Vellymalay,(2012) . However, the researcher has modified the structure of the questions according to the objective of the present study and made some modification in its response format. This paper focuses on two components, that is, parent's background specifically on the parent's socioeconomic status and parental involvement at home.

The questionnaire consisted of close ended questions which were related to the parent's background and divided into two parts: The first part included the following variables: gender, age, residence, educational status, occupation, income. The second part included (10) items measured the parental involvement at home, which is related to the questions on parental involvement at home.

Method

Before distribution the questionnaires the researcher informed and explained the purpose and nature of the study to the respondents'. All the respondents were informed that the purpose of the study was for scientific means only and all information provided by them will remain confidential. The tool of data collection containing questions on parent's background and the parental involvement in their child's education was used to obtain quantitative data from the respondents. For each question on parental involvement, the respondents were asked to mark one of the following five responses: 'Daily', 'Few times a week', 'Few times a month', 'once every few months' or 'Never' for each item regarding the parents' involvement in their child's education.

After collecting the data from the respondents, the entire data base was processed by the researcher himself. After the data was systematized, classified and tabulated, the researcher proceeded to analyze and interpret it. The present study reports about the questionnaire.

All the information gathered from the respondents from the questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The reliability analysis showed that all ten items in the category of 'parental involvement at home' were consistent. The Cronbach's alpha measure was 0.76 which indicates that the measure of these items is reliable.

Hypothesis

The present study will examine the following assumptions:

1. There exists a correlation between the education level of the parents and their involvement with their children.
2. There exists a correlation between the socio-economic situation of the parents and parental involvement with their children.

Results

The family is considered as one of the most important environmental factor that influences the personality development of the child. Families, regardless of Scio-economic status, usually have certain characteristics that influence the growth of the children. The present study deal with: the influence of parental socioeconomic status and their Involvement at home. The most influential socioeconomic status factors related to family involvement at home and it's interaction to educational achievement of their twelve class children's have been studied. The results of present study have been presented in table 1 -2. Frequency, percentage, regression test and p-value, has been worked out so that to measured the parental involvement shown by the parents at home.

The results of the presents study which deal with the respondents family background, reveals that 72% of the respondents parents were female. This is an indication that the responsibility lays on the mothers in following their children's education and are more involved and helpful to their children comparing to their fathers 28%. The majority of the respondents parents are in the age group 41-50 years (n=73;48.7%) followed by (n=44;29.3%) are in the age group 51-60 years .The finding also shows that majority of the parents (n=125;83.3%) were from rural area, whereas only (n=25;16.7%) came from urban area . This give us clear picture that rural people give much important to their children's education and also the availability of educational institutions in the rural areas, which make it easy to parents to send their children's to school. It was observed that majority of the parents (n=142; 94.7%) were married and only (n=8; 5.3%) were widows.

Table 1: Parent's Socioeconomic Status

	Socioeconomic Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level of education	12 class & Below	12	18.7
	12 class	29	19.3
	Diploma (2years course)	29	19.3
	Graduation	46	30.7
	Post Graduation	18	12.0
Occupation	Unemployed	35	23.3
	Govt. services	56	37.3
	Private Sectors	35	23.3
	Army Forces	24	16.0
Income*	JD 200 & Less	5	3.3
	JD 201-500	74	49.3
	JD 501 – 800	48	32.0
	JD 801 – 1100	18	18.0
	JD >1101	5	3.3

n=150 respondents

**Each 100 US Dollar = JD 71.*

Socioeconomic status of the parents is presented in table (1). It is clear from the data in table (1), that (n=28; 18.7%) of the parents went to school but did not completed 12 class, while (n=29; 19.3%) could manage to complete their education up to 12 class, followed by (n=46; 30.7%) were graduation, whereas (n=29; 19.3%) completed their diploma. Moreover only (n=18; 12.6%) of the parents in this study managed to complete their post graduation level.

It is also clear from Table 1, that majority (n=56; 37.3%) of the parents are government employee, Where they work in different governmental departments as, school teachers, professional, technical, administrator, clerical work and so on. Followed by private sector employee (n=35; 23.3%), also they work as administrator, accountant, or in their own businesses. Whereas (n=35; 23.3%) of the parents were found to be unemployed (Housewife), followed by (n=24; 16.0%) of the parents were in army forces. The occupation of the parent usually determined the economical background of the family.

As shown in Table 1, majority of the parents income (n=74; 49.3%) is JD 201-500, which categorize them in the low income families, followed by (n=48; 32.0%) of the parents income is between JD 501-800, which also categorize them in the middle income families. It is also apparent from the table that (n=18; 12.0%) of the parents income is between JD 801- 1100, and categorized them in the upper middle income families. Few parents (n=5; 3.3%) revealed that their income is more than JD 1101, which means they come in the high income families. The findings also shows that (n=5; 3.3%) of the parents revealed that their income is less than JD200, which means they belong to poor family income. The result of the present study justifies that most of the parents under study have middle form of economic capital, and few of them have high economic capital, and also poor economic capital.

The second part of the present study examines the correlation between the parent's socioeconomic status and parental involvement at home based on the ten strategies of parental involvement that have been observed at home. It is clear from the findings of the present study that the strength of the relationship is not very strong, and it is moderate and significant in some of the strategies of parental involvement. Table 2 provides us with a clear picture of the correlations between the socioeconomic status of the parents under study and the ten strategies of parental involvement.

As far as the educational level of the parents is concerned, it is clear from table 2 that the educational level of the parents has greater impact on parental involvement strategies than parental occupation and income. The bivariate relationship between parent's educational level and the parental involvement strategies at home reveal that the relationship is moderate for six of the ten strategies enforced. All the six strategies implemented are significant at the (p=0.01) level. Therefore the results of the study shows evidence that parent with higher educational level are more involve with their children's studies. It is clear from table 2 that parents with high educational level are more involve in discussion on school activities taking by the children at school so that to understand the activities and other things that their children do in school (r=0.27, p< 0.01), identifying academic problems at school that being faced by children so that to discuss it with the children ,the school teachers and principle in order to find best solutions for these problems (r=0.24, p< 0.01). They are also more likely to be involve in assisting their children with their homework (r=.29, p<0.01), and in identifying homework (r=0.31, p< 0.01) in order to make difficulties easier to them and also to save the time that the children spend in trying to solve and complete their homework. Moreover, they are more likely to be involved in Identifying learning patterns of their children (r=0.55, p<0.01) and in determining time limits for their children everyday study activities (r=0.22, p< 0.01).

Table 2: Correlation between Parents' Socioeconomic Status and Strategies of Parental Involvement
Parents' Socioeconomic Status

Parental Involvement Strategies	Education		Occupation		Income	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
Discussion on future planning	0.042	0.606	0.184*	0.024	0.037	0.657
Discussion on school activities	0.270**	0.001	0.102	0.215	0.163*	0.046
Identifying academic problems at school	0.248**	0.002	0.015	0.860	0.012	0.881
Identifying academic problems at home	0.056	0.495	0.055	0.504	0.150	0.067
Assisting with homework	0.298**	0.000	0.035	0.673	0.051	0.537
Identifying homework	0.316**	0.000	0.231**	0.005	0.034	0.681
Guidance for examination	0.152	0.064	0.017	0.841	0.096	0.241
Motivation	0.101	0.219	0.248**	0.000	0.175*	0.032
Time Limits	0.222**	0.006	0.380**	0.000	0.230**	0.005
Identifying learning patterns	0.554**	0.000	0.179*	0.028	0.173*	0.035

n = 150 respondents

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The parents' occupation and the parental involvement strategies at home show that the relationship is moderate for three out of the ten strategies and it is significant at the ($p=0.01$) level. Parents with higher occupational status found to be more involved in identifying the homework for their children in order to help them overcome difficulty being faced by their children and to save time consumed by children to do their homework ($r=0.23$, $p<0.01$), also in motivating their children so that to look after their study in appropriate manner ($r=0.284$, $p<0.01$), and in determining time limits for their children everyday study activities ($r=0.380$, $p<0.01$).

As shown in table 2, the parents' income and the parental involvement strategies at home show that the relationship is moderate for one out of the ten strategies and it is significant at the ($p=0.01$) level. Parents with higher income are more likely to be involved in determining time limits for their children everyday studying activities ($r=0.230$, $p<0.01$).

Discussion

The present study aimed at determining the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and parental involvement strategies in their child's education among Jordanian parents who have enrolled their children in governmental schools. The finding of the study revealed that parents are found to be involved with their children education aiming to help their children to have better education in different strategies. Based on the finding of the present study, the parents are found to be involved in identifying learning patterns of their children, also in identifying homework given to the children while they were in the school. They are more likely to be involved in assisting their children with their homework if the children face any difficulty. Moreover, they are likely to discuss their children school activities so that to understand the activities and other things that their children do in school. The parents are also more involved in identifying the academic problems faced by their children at school so that to discuss it with the children, the school teachers and principle in order to find best solutions for these problems. And in providing time limits for their children everyday study activities. In addition, they also often motivate their children so that to look after their study in appropriate manner.

However, the involvement of parents at home with their children at home is found to be associated with the socioeconomic status of the parents. The findings of the present study are in agreement with the study carried out by (Kingsley, 2011; Christenson & Sheriden, 2001; Sui-chu & willms, 1996; Singh & Vinod, 2012), which suggested that parents are involved in encouraging their children, discussing future, educational plan, and school activities. The findings of the current study also are consistent with the findings of (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Hoover-Dempsey, et al, 1987), which shows that parents' involvement is an important component of student success and achievement. The findings of the study are also in agreement with the studies carried out by (Kellaghan, et al, 1993; Trusty, 1999), which suggested that parents' involvement has a lasting effect throughout the educational careers of the students.

The findings of the current study indicate that parents' educational level has a greater impact on parental involvement strategies than their occupation and income. In the present study the higher the educational level of parents, the higher would be the parental involvement at home. These results accept the first assumption set for the current study: There exist a correlation between the educational level of the parents and their involvement with their children. They are found to be having more knowledge and understanding of the best and foremost effective ways in supervising and guiding their children education. They are more likely to help their children and provide them with the most effective solution to their academic difficulties when they encounter it at school or home. Parent with higher educational level are more likely to be able to assist their children with their homework if any problem solving arise. They are also having the ability to set learning patterns to their children comparing to those parents with low educational level or those who uneducated parents. The findings of the current study are consistent with the study of (Vellymalay, 2012 ab; Balli, et al, 1998; poston & Falbo's, 1990), who suggested that parents with higher level of education are more likely to help their children in their education and are more able to communicate and interact with their children. On the other hand, some parents with low educational levels did not tend to regard learning as a value, and as a result of their attitudes and low self-esteem they left the education of their children to the 'experts', the teaching staff (Bauch & Goldring, 1998).

The findings of the current study revealed that the relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement at home is moderate in some strategies.

It shows that parents with high occupational status are more likely to be able to identify and help their children in their homework, and also in motivating their children to have better education. The occupation status of parents is highly connected with the monthly income of the family. Family with high income can provide the necessary skills, knowledge, tools, and instruments that are needed by the children. The findings of the current study are consistent with the finding of (Midrag & Midraj, 2011), in regards of the affect of parental occupation on their involvement strategies at home.

However, the current study came with some findings which show that the parental involvement at home is present regardless of parental occupation and income status. Although it presented some correlation between parental occupation and parental involvement strategies such as: identifying homework, motivating children, and determining time limits for their children to study. And it also showed correlation between parental income and their involvement in one strategy that is determining time limits for their children to study. The findings reveal that, regardless of income and occupation of parents, the parents were found to be involved in their children education. This study is found to support the study of (Lareau, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2003), which demonstrated that low-socioeconomic status parents are just as eager to help their children succeed in school as their higher-socioeconomic status counterpart.

The findings of this research on the influence of parental socioeconomic status on their involvement strategies in their children education among Jordanian parents, provides more evidence for the importance of parental involvement at home regardless of their socioeconomic status. Successful parental involvement strategies can empower parents to assist their children in becoming successful in attaining better education. Thus the study refused to some extent the assumption that, there exist a correlation between the socioeconomic status (occupation& income) situation of the parents and parental involvement with their children.

Study Limitation

The following study limitation should be considered when interpreting findings. The current study was confined to 12 grade students, which called in Jordan (Tawjeehi) who completed their education at governmental schools, and excluded other students who are pursuing their school education .The study focused on parental educational level, occupations and income variables and did not address the affect of other variables that may have impact on parental involvement at home.

Suggestion

Despite limitations, this study provides findings that can inform future research, family care agencies, educational institutions, social work agencies and interventions to the important of parental involvement and their role in helping their children to have better education. We suggest that future research should focus on family-school relationship and its impact on child education, on parental socioeconomic status and their involvement at schools, and on the impact of parental socioeconomic status on their attachment with their children. This research could provide parents with knowledge and better understanding of their role at home.

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