

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to check the impact of demographic factors on the parental involvement in pre-school education of their children in the Luoyang city Henan province. A total sample of 500 parents was selected. The survey questionnaire was used to collect data. A total of 400 complete survey questionnaires was used for data analysis. Descriptive Statistics, One-way ANOVA, and Tukey HSD test were applied for getting reliable data analysis results. Results showed that all 4 demographic factors (Gender, Age, Work Experience, and Education Level) have a significant impact on parental involvement in the pre-school education of children. Mostly female presents, with old age, more work experience, and college-level education are involved in the preschool education of their children. All four hypotheses are rejected and we get a clear answer to all four research questions. Limitations of the study and future stud recommendations were also given.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Pre-school Education, Demographic Factors, Gender, Age, Work Experience, Education Level.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

With the development of the national economy and the improvement of people's living standards, pre-school education caused wide social attention, and requirement of the society for high-quality pre-school education is even stronger. Preschool is an important part of the national education system and the basic stage of children's future development. The quality of preschool education is related to the healthy growth of children and the future development of the country and the nation. Children's preschool education is an extremely complex process. It not only depends on kindergarten education but also requires the participation of parents. (Zhang, X.P.2014).Through cooperation between the two parties, children can achieve high-quality development. Parental participation is frequently acknowledged as a significant factor in students' academic progress and general success in school. It is also regarded as a remedy or solution to rectify concerns associated with low student achievement; hence, it can further be used to devise educational reforms. Researchers have used it to predict future learning performance in kids with lower grades (McDowall et al., 2019). Researchers in preschool education has revealed that when parents participate in their kids' education, their children's grades improve (MacDonell, 2019; Malik et al., 2021). This study used the descriptive research method to investigate the parents' involvement in preschool education and its

relationship with demographic factors (Gender, Age, Working Experience, and Education Level)

1.2 Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to gender?
2. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to age?
3. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to working experience?
4. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to education level?

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Families play an essential role in their children's education, and scholars and practitioners are well aware of this fact. A study conducted by Epstein and Sheldon in 2002 showed that students who are involved in family education achieve better academically (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001), find motivational boosting more effective (Green et al., 2007), and have fewer discipline problems (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). There is also considerable evidence to point out that family involvement in the early years of a child's development is a significant protective factor for the development of such children (Sun et al., 2018). For early intervention programs to be effective, it has become essential to involve families in their children's education to promote their development. The empirical work associated with Chinese family involvement in early childhood is somewhat limited because no reliable and valid measure is available for use in the Chinese setting. For programs designed to engage families in the educational process to be evaluated, they must be able to use psychometrically sound measurement tools to determine the effects of family involvement on children's school performance. There is no doubt that the concept of parent involvement in the school process has many aspects, so measuring the extent to which parents participate in the school process can be challenging since there are a variety of ways to measure it, such as what people do in school, at home, and in the community, in addition to transactional activities between parents, schools and the district (Downer & Myers, 2010). Several factors determine family involvement, but Epstein (1995) argues that there are six significant categories of involvement: parental involvement, communication, volunteerism, learning at home, participation in decision-making on school matters, and collaboration with the community to indicate that involvement is multi-dimensional. Using the Bronfenbrenner and Morris family involvement model as an example, she connects school and home as the closest influence systems to support children's socialization and academic achievement in both settings (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Among the many models of family involvement in the Chinese cultural scene that have been proposed in the literature according to Ho's (1995) bi-dimensional model, there is no doubt that Ho's model is one of the most widely used. There are four classifications of family involvement, as defined by him: the discussion that takes place at home, the supervision that takes place at home, the participation that takes place at school, and the communication between the school and home. There is, however, an essential distinction between the first

two types of involvement, which are generally based at home, and the latter two types typically found at school (Ho, 1995). Many empirical studies have been conducted to analyze Chinese family involvement, but they have primarily focused on adolescents and used measures reported by the children (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2011). Due to young children's limited language and cognitive development levels, these measures cannot be applied since they have minimal application. The early stages of a child's education are a particularly vulnerable time in their lives because families have different ways of supporting their children. Chinese Early Parental Involvement Scale (CEPIS) is an assessment tool developed by Lau et al. (2012) that measures parental involvement in children's lives during their early years in Chinese families. A 26-item questionnaire, which consists of six dimensions, contains seven items related to parent instruction, five things related to parent discussion, five things related to language and cognitive activities, two items related to homework involvement, three items related to home-school conferencing, and three items related to preschool involvement. While the six-dimensional measure to assess the participation of Chinese families in early childhood education has shown a high level of validity in theoretical studies, empirical studies have found that it has not been well validated (Liu & Li, 2015).

To understand how Chinese families support the development of their children, it is crucial to develop valid and age-appropriate assessments of Chinese family involvement in the early years of a child's development based on the experiences of Chinese parents and children. Several existing measurement tools may be used to assess the nature and extent of family involvement in preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade programs. Despite this, the empirically-derived Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) still stands out as having one of the most substantial psychometric bases for measuring family involvement (Fantuzzo et al., 2000). The only multidimensional questionnaire on the relationship between parental involvement and development ecology that is theoretically grounded and empirically validated is currently available (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). By the FIQ, there are three distinct aspects of the conference: the home-based conference, the home-school conference, and the school-based conference. There is no doubt that parents' involvement in school-based activities is essential and includes the opportunity to participate in parenting workshops and their assistance in the classroom. Children can be involved in a wide range of activities during their home educational process, including various literacy-related activities, coursework assistance, and discussions about school and academic expectations with their parents. Parents and teachers can discuss children's progress and problems during home-school conferences. Several steps are involved in this process, including attending meetings with parents and teachers and corresponding with teachers about the student's progress and concerns. Consequently, longitudinal studies on early childhood family involvement have extensively relied on three empirical constructs of family involvement in early childhood (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2016; Downer & Mendez, 2005; McWayne et al., 2015; Mendez, 2010; Wanders et al., 2007). In the study conducted by Fantuzzo et al. (2013), it has been shown that the validity of this measure is independent of family type, the level of education of the caregiver, the family income, the language of the primary home, and ethnicity. It has been found by McWayne et al. (2008) that married parents are more likely to interact with their children's teachers and be more involved in their children's education at home as a result of the research conducted. Fantuzzo et al. (2013) and another study by Wanders et al. (2007) concluded that involvement activities at home and school are positively associated with parent education. Fantuzzo et al. (2013) found in their study that fewer unemployed parents

communicated with their children's teachers, and the number of unemployed parents was higher.

Parents of African American children in the United States report experiencing a lower level of school-based involvement compared to parents of Caucasians (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). There has, however, been a significant number of empirical studies on the participation of families in one cultural setting compared to other environments. Because there are no culturally invariant measures to use in comparative studies to examine the multiple dimensions of family involvement across different countries, it is difficult for researchers to conduct such studies. Developing a standard applicable to culturally diverse families is essential to comprehend the differences in family involvement across cultures and to create effective programs to help all families in need. As a general proposition, it should be pointed out that parenting in culture is shaped primarily by the values and norms present in that particular culture. Parents' perceptions of their role in education are likely to be influenced by the traditional Chinese culture, which may determine the involvement activities they undertake. Some Chinese parents tend to see education as one of their significant responsibilities to their children; they value education and academic excellence in their children's schools (Luo et al., 2013). It is no secret that many Chinese believe parents play an integral role in their children's education. However, one of the most common Chinese sayings from The Three Character Classic strongly implies that the father is responsible for the failure of the child to receive an education. In addition to helping their children with homework at home, many Chinese parents provide educational resources and additional opportunities for them, which are seen as helping to increase academic achievement at home (Lau, 2013). Teachers are generally revered as experts in education and authority in the field. Their participation in school activities is mostly passive; they interact less frequently with teachers and participate in fewer school activities than their counterparts (Lau et al., 2011).

Formal learning has become an increasingly intrusive part of the home life of young children in several countries, especially during the recent Coronavirus pandemic. It is estimated that 90% of countries will have implemented a remote learning policy by August 2020, and 60% will have done so for pre-primary education (UNICEF, 2020c). It became apparent that online learning and remote learning are two different things: online learning is a pre-planned digital instruction offering, whereas remote learning is more collaborative and includes scaffolds and active learning within the concept of an ethics of care (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). The increase in remote learning had resulted in many young children living a school fiction in every aspect of their lives, a trend growing even before the pandemic (Formosinho, 2021). During the COVID-19 restrictions, early childhood settings and schools needed to close for months so that their children could complete their work at home. This way, parents were positioned as unqualified teachers to their young children (Borisova, 2020; Brossard et al., 2020). Most parents were challenged to juggle their paid work with supporting their children's learning at home, resulting in increased stress for some parents. In a report published by Toran et al. (2021), it was stated that despite the disruption of their daily routines, parents in Turkey and China found it difficult to cope with the phenomenon. Craig & Churchill (2021) have also found that in Australia, during COVID-19 restrictions, mothers increased their unpaid work time at home, causing them to become more stressed and dissatisfied at home. According to Wasmuth&Nitecki (2020), the experiences parents have during the pandemic of trying to introduce formal education to their children may contribute

to their increasing recognition that they cannot be replaced easily by people who are not qualified to teach them and that public schools are so important to their communities and their individual lives that they cannot be disconnected from them (Wasmuth&Nitecki, 2020).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A detailed discussion of past literature reveals that considering that the cultural influences on family involvement patterns have been extensively studied in Western literature, it may be interesting to examine the cultural and racial variations in family involvement practices. A study of Chinese culture might also prove relevant in substantiating such observations regarding artistic effects on family involvement. No past study has analyzed the demographic factors' impact on parents' involvement in the preschool education of their children, particularly in China. So, there is a clear research gap available for this topic. The present study is designed to investigate the parents' involvement in preschool education of their children based on demographic factors; Gender, Age, Working Experience, and Education Level. Research Questions and Hypotheses have been developed for these demographic factors. The population of this study is the parents of school-going children from Luoyang city Henan province, based on the time and resources, a sample of 500 parents was selected. Data was collected with the help of a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from 5 kindergartens. First, 40 parents' sample was taken for the pilot study test, after a successful pilot study test, the final sample of 460 parents was selected. The survey was conducted through a face-to-face meeting with parents in schools, by phone calls, and by social media contact. After successful data collection, a complete survey questionnaire of 400 parents was finalized for data analysis. 60 incomplete survey questionnaires were dropped for the accuracy of data analysis results. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS 25. Descriptive Statistics, One Way ANOVA, and Tukey HSD Test were applied to check the impact of all demographic factors.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to gender?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to gender.

The purpose of this analysis was to see the difference in parental involvement in preschool according to gender. The results of the comparison between parental involvement and different gender questions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of parental involvement between male and femaleLevel of significance at $p < 0.05$.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Male	89	34.31	4.32	-2.26	-4.01	398	.000
Female	311	36.57	4.77				

Table
1

indicated that the involvement of females is higher (Mean=36.57, SD=4.77) than the involvement of males (Mean=34.31, SD=4.32). Results of the independent samples t-test clearly show that there is a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to Gender (Mean Difference=-2.26, $t = -4.01$, $df = 398$, $p=0.000$). Therefore, the findings reject null hypothesis 2a, and Research Question 2a is answered. These results indicate those female parents are significantly more involved than male parents in preschool.

RQ2. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to age?

Ho.2. There is no significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their age.

Table 2a: Comparison of the mean total number of parental involvements in different ages

Report		
Parental Involvement		
Age	Mean	N
21 - 30	35.0694	72
31 - 40	35.5516	223
41 - 50	37.8437	96
above 51	38.0000	9
Total	36.0700	400

The age in this study includes 21 - 30, 31-40, 41-50, and more than 50. Table 4.3a shows that the total mean number of parental involvements is 36.07. The parental involvement of the age 21-30 made the least number (Mean=35.06), followed by the age of 31-40 (Mean=35.55) and the age of 41-50 (Mean=37.84). The parental involvement of the age above 51 made the most number. (Mean=38.00).

Table 2b: Comparison of parental involvement according to different ages, using One-way ANOVA

One-way ANOVA					
Parental Involvement					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	467.574	3	155.858	7.195	.000
Within Groups	8578.466	396	21.663		
Total	9046.040	399			

The findings in Table 2b show the results of the One-way ANOVA show that there is a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their age. ($F=7.0195$, $df= 3$, $p=.000$). These findings reject Ho2b and answer Research Question 2b.

Table 2c: Results of Tukey HSD test showing parental involvement in preschool according to different ages.

Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement
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(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
21 - 30	31 - 40	-.48213	.63088	.871	-2.1098	1.1455
	41 - 50	-2.77431*	.72562	.001	-4.6464	-.9022
	above 51	-2.93056	1.64555	.284	-7.1760	1.3149
31 - 40	21 - 30	.48213	.63088	.871	-1.1455	2.1098
	41 - 50	-2.29218*	.56815	.000	-3.7580	-.8264
	above 51	-2.44843	1.58244	.410	-6.5311	1.6342
41 - 50	21 - 30	2.77431*	.72562	.001	.9022	4.6464
	31 - 40	2.29218*	.56815	.000	.8264	3.7580
	above 51	-.15625	1.62254	1.000	-4.3424	4.0299
above 51	21 - 30	2.93056	1.64555	.284	-1.3149	7.1760
	31 - 40	2.44843	1.58244	.410	-1.6342	6.5311
	41 - 50	.15625	1.62254	1.000	-4.0299	4.3424

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the One-way ANOVA Tukey HSD indicate that the involvement of parents aged 21-30 has significantly lower involvement than that parents of aged 41-50 (Mean difference=-2.77, p=0.001). Parents who are ages 31-40 have significantly lower involvement than parents of age 41-50 (Mean difference=-2.29, p=0.000). Parents who are ages 41-50 have a significantly higher involvement than parents the aged 21-30 (Mean Difference=2.77, p=.001); the parents the age 31-40 (Mean Difference=2.29, p=.000)

RQ3.Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to working experience?

Ho.3. There is no significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their working experience.

Table 3a: Comparison of the mean number of parental involvement in different working experience

Report Parental Involvement		
Working	Mean	N
0 - 3 years	33.3529	17
4 - 9 years	35.6416	173
10 - 19 years	36.3135	185
more than 20 years	39.0800	25
Total	36.0700	400

The working experience in this study includes 0-3 years, 4-9 years, 10-19 years, and more than 20 years. Table 4.6a shows that the total mean number of parental involvements in different working experiences is 36.07. The parental involvement of the working experience 0-3 years made the least number (Mean=33.35), followed by the working experience of 4-9

years (Mean=35.64) and working experience of 10-19 years (Mean=36.31). The parental involvement of more than 20 years made the most number (Mean=39.08).

Table 3b: Comparison of parental involvement according to different working experiences, using One-way ANOVA

ANOVA					
Parental Involvement					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	394.721	3	131.574	6.023	.001
Within Groups	8651.319	396	21.847		
Total	9046.040	399			

Findings in Table 3b show the results of the One-way ANOVA show that there is a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their working experience. (F=6.023, df= 3, p=.001). These findings reject Ho3 and answer Research Question 3.

Table 3c: Results of Tukey HSD test showing parental involvement in preschool according to their working experience.

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement						
(I) Working	(J) Working	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0 - 3 years	4 - 9 years	-2.28868	1.18802	.219	-5.3537	.7764
	10 - 19 years	-2.96057	1.18457	.062	-6.0167	.0956
	more than 20 years	-5.72706*	1.46934	.001	-9.5179	-1.9362
4 - 9 years	0 - 3 years	2.28868	1.18802	.219	-.7764	5.3537
	10 - 19 years	-.67190	.49434	.526	-1.9473	.6035
	more than 20 years	-3.43838*	1.00008	.004	-6.0186	-.8582
10 - 19 years	0 - 3 years	2.96057	1.18457	.062	-.0956	6.0167
	4 - 9 years	.67190	.49434	.526	-.6035	1.9473
	more than 20 years	-2.76649*	.99597	.029	-5.3361	-.1969

more than 20 years	0 - 3 years	5.72706*	1.4693 4	.001	1.9362	9.5179
	4 - 9 years	3.43838*	1.0000 8	.004	.8582	6.0186
	10 - 19 years	2.76649*	.99597	.029	.1969	5.3361
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

The results of the One-way ANOVA Tukey HSD indicate that involvement of parents in the working experience 0-3 years has significantly lower involvement than parents of working experience more than 20 years (Mean Difference=-5.573, $p=0.001$). Parents who are working experience of 4-9 years have significantly lower involvement than more than 20 years (Mean Difference=-3.44, $p=.004$). Parents who are a working experience of 10-19 years have significantly lower involvement than more than 20 years (Mean Difference=-2.76, $p=.029$). Parents who are working experience of more than 20 years have a significantly higher involvement than 0-3 years (Mean Difference=5.73, $p=0.001$); 4-9 years (Mean Difference=3.43, $p=0.004$); 10-19 years (Mean Difference=2.76, $p=0.029$)

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to education level?

Ho.4. There is no significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their education level.

Table 4a: Comparison of the mean number of parental involvements between education levels

Report		
Parental Involvement		
Level	Mean	N
Less than High School	33.1842	38
High School Graduate	35.0135	74
College	36.8594	192
Post Graduate	36.4479	96
Total	36.0700	400

The Education level in this study includes Less Than High school, High School Graduate, College, and Postgraduate. Table 4.8a shows that the total mean number of parental involvements in different education levels is 36.07. The involvement of parents with an education level Less than high school made the least number (Mean=33.18), followed by the education level of high school Graduates (Mean=35.01) and the education level of postgraduates (Mean=36.44). The parental involvement of the college made the most number. (Mean=36.86).

Table 4b: Comparison of parental involvement according to different education levels, using One-way ANOVA

ANOVA					
Parental Involvement					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	532.400	3	177.467	8.255	.000
Within Groups	8513.640	396	21.499		
Total	9046.040	399			

Findings in Table 4.8b show the results of the One-way ANOVA show that there is a significant difference in parental involvement in preschool according to their education level. (F=8.255, df= 3, p=.000). These findings reject Ho4 and answer Research Question4.

Table 4c: Results of Tukey HSD test showing parental involvement in preschool according to their education level

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement						
(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Less than High School	High School Graduate	-1.82930	.92536	.198	-4.2167	.5581
	College	-3.67516*	.82325	.000	-5.7991	-1.5512
	Post Graduate	-3.26371*	.88866	.002	-5.5564	-.9710
High School Graduate	Less than High School	1.82930	.92536	.198	-.5581	4.2167
	College	-1.84586*	.63443	.020	-3.4827	-.2090
	Post Graduate	-1.43440	.71727	.190	-3.2849	.4161
College	Less than High School	3.67516*	.82325	.000	1.5512	5.7991
	High School Graduate	1.84586*	.63443	.020	.2090	3.4827
	PG Graduate	.41146	.57959	.893	-1.0839	1.9068
Post Graduate	Less than High School	3.26371*	.88866	.002	.9710	5.5564
	High School	1.43440	.71727	.190	-.4161	3.2849

	Graduate					
	College	-.41146	.57959	.893	-1.9068	1.0839
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

The results of the One-way ANOVA Tukey HSD indicate that involvement of parents in the education level of less than high school has significantly lower involvement than parents of college education (Mean Difference=-3.67, $p=0.000$) and postgraduate education (Mean Difference=-3.26, $p=.002$). Parents who are high school graduates have significantly lower involvement than college graduates (Mean Difference=-1.84, $p=.020$). Parents who are college graduates have significantly higher involvement in pre-school compared to parents whose education level is less than high school (Mean Difference=3.67, $p=.000$) and high school graduates (Mean Difference=1.85, $p=.020$). Parents who are the post-graduates have significantly higher involvement in pre-school than parents whose education level is less than high school (Mean difference= 3.26, $p=.002$).

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to find the impact of demographic factors on the parents' involvement in the pre-school education of their children. Four demographic factors were selected for analysis; Gender, Age, Work Experiences, and Education level of parents. A sample of 500 parents was selected for data collection with the help of a survey questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted with 20 parents' samples. A total of 480 samples were distributed to the survey questionnaire, and 400 complete questionnaires were finally used for data analysis. The data analysis results are discussed in detail with the help of descriptive analysis, one-way ANOVA, and the Tukey HSD test. It is finally concluded that demographic factors have a significant impact on parents' involvement in the pre-school education of their children. Gender factor analysis revealed that females are more significantly involved as compared to male parents, therefore hypothesis H1 is rejected and the research question 1 answer is achieved that, there is a significant difference in parental involvement in the preschool education of children. Age factors analysis showed that parents' involvement of age more than 51 is the highest. It means old parents are significantly involved in the pre-school education of their children. All aged parents don't involve equally in pre-school education. So we get the research question 2 answer; there is a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to age, and H2 is rejected. The 3rd demographic variable tested was work experience. It is clear from the data analysis results that, with more than 20 years of experience parents are mostly involved in the preschool education of their children. Hence, we get the answer to 3rd research question, there is a significant difference in parental involvement in pre-school according to working experience. In this way, 3rd Hypothesis H3 is also rejected. Education was the last demographic factor studied in this research. From the data analysis results, it is concluded that college-educated parents are mostly involved in the preschool education of their children. This gives us the answer to the 4th research question and hence, 4th Hypothesis H4 is also rejected. It is, finally, concluded that all 4 demographic factors have a significant impact on parental involvement in the preschool education of children. Mostly female presents, with old age, more work experience, and college-level education are involved in the preschool education of their children. All four hypotheses are rejected and we get a clear answer to all four research questions. This study was limited to Luoyang city Henan Province. So, we cannot generalize the findings of this research to the whole country, China. It is, therefore, a good source of

future research for the whole country. It will be helpful for teachers and school officials to make policies to get involved more parents. In this way, parents will be provided more information about preschool education for their children. Ultimately, parents will be able to solve the academic problems of their children at the early education level.

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