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Work Variables as Related to Parental Involvement in Dual Earner Couples with Young Children

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried to relate work variables to parental involvement and its three dimensions namely engagement, responsibility and accessibility in dual earner couples with young children belonging to Jammu. The sample for the present study comprised of 90 working couples (45 mothers and 45 fathers) with at least one child in the age group of 0-3 years. The entire sample was selected through snowball and purposive sampling techniques. Sample couples belonged to three different type of job sectors namely, government, private and business. The tools used for the study were Interview Schedule, Parental Involvement scale and Job Satisfaction Scale. The results reveal that majority of the mother were working 4-6 hours daily as compared to majority of the fathers who worked for 8-10 hours daily. The mothers were found to be more engaged and more accessible to their children as compared to their fathers. However at the same time fathers and mothers were found to be equally responsible for their children. Statistical procedures reveal that mother were more involved as compared to the fathers. Majority of the parents were satisfied with their respective job. Age was found to be insignificantly correlated with parental involvement and its various components. Education level of parents was significant correlated with accessibility and parental involvement. Also, job satisfaction of the parent was found to have significant correlation with total parent involvement as well as all the three components namely, engagement, responsibility and accessibility separately. Also salary received and working hours were significantly correlated with parental involvement.

KEYWORDS : Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Parental Responsibility, Parental Accessibility, Job Satisfaction

Introduction:

Parenting is probably the most intensive experience, most individuals have with children and it is in the course of interaction with one owns developing child that the growth and change during adult life are likely to occur. Parents have been regarding as role caretakers hence their understanding and ideas about the development of the child will obviously affect their behavior (Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

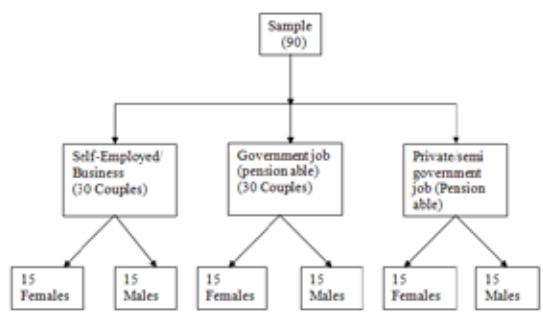
In the last three decades, there has been an upsurge of interest in parental involvement and parental interaction with children. The interest is related to the changing roles of parents in industrialized societies. A vast majority of women with young children are in the work force. This reality necessitated a reconfiguration of the family and redefinition of paternal role (Tamis -LeMonda and Cabrera, 1999). Our society now expects fathers to assume an active role with their children (Marsiglio, 1991; Tamis-Le Monda and Cabrera, 1999). Even though the working mothers continue to carry the major responsibility for childcare yet fathers also try to contribute to child care and upbringing directly or indirectly (Mc Bride & Mills, 1993).

Besides the children's characteristics, such as age and gender, which tend to influence parental involvement, parental characteristics also continue to have significant influence in the relationship they share with their children (Doherty et al, 1998). Parental job and occupation is one such factor that can have significant effect. More than two decades of research have demonstrated that work and family life are inextricably linked. Work schedules and job responsibilities place demands on parents that must be accommodated by family .The contemporary work-family conflict literature suggests two distinct elements, work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Frone et al, 1997).

With this as background the present study was carried out to assess the role of working (father and mother) couples in the three dimensions of parental involvement namely engagement, responsibility and accessibility. Further, the correlation of parental involvement with job variables namely, type of job, working hours, salary received and job satisfaction was carried out.

Methods and Material: The methodological framework for the study is presented as follows:

i) Sample: Sample for the present study comprised of 90 working couples with at least one child in the age group of 0-3 years. All the selected couples belonged to middle SES families residing in urban areas of Jammu.



Sampling Framework

ii) Sample Techniques: The sample was selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. A survey was conducted in the pre-schools and creches within the municipal limits of Jammu to identify dual earner couples having at least one child in the age group of 0-3years. Those sample families which were able to fulfill the set criteria were selected by purposive sampling techniques. Partially some of the sample was also selected by snowball sampling technique.

iii) Tools For Data Collection:

a. Interview Schedule: A semi structured interview schedule was the main tool used for data collection. The schedule comprised of two major parts:

The general information: This pertained to queries related to the respondent's name, age, sex, religion, educational qualification, occupation, type of job, type of families, address and phone number.

The specific information: This part related to the salary received, timing of working hours, level of satisfaction from work.

b. Parental Involvement scale: This scale covers three main areas of parental involvement i.e. engagement, responsibility and accessibility. Most of the items in the scale were derived from McBride's Parental Responsibility Scale, 1993. Each item has three options never, occasionally and always, which further carry a weight age of 1(never), 2(occasionally), and 3(always). The total scores gives a quick measures of low, moderate and high level of parental involvement.

c. **Job Satisfaction Scale:** A standardized Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Singh and Sharma (1999) was used to know how much the

respondents were satisfied with their job.

iv) Data Analysis: Depending upon the data obtained, analysis was done by using both qualitative and quantitative method. For qualitative data content analysis was done and for quantitative data statistical techniques were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented as follows

1. AGE OF PARENTS

Table 1 Age of parents

Age (in years)	Mother n	%	Father N	%	Total n	%
20-24	3	6.7%	-	-	3	3.3%
25-29	14	31.1%	5	11.1%	19	21.1%
30-34	19	42.2%	14	31.1%	33	36.7%
35-39	9	20%	20	44.4%	29	32.2%
40-45	-	-	6	13.3%	6	6.7%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =*18.19**, table value =9.49, α= 0.05 *significant at 1%

The results reveal that majority of the mother (42.2%) were 30-34 years old while majority of the fathers (44.4%) were 35-39 years old. Calculation of X^2 also reveals that there is a significant difference in the age of fathers and mothers. The mean age of mother was 30.37 while that of father was 34.53, pointing that the fathers were slightly older than mothers. This is a reflection of our social norm where usually the wives are younger than their husbands.

2. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF PARENTS

Table 2 Educational qualification of parents

Educational qualification	Mother n	%	Father n	%	Total n	%
Under matric	2	4.4%	1	2.2%	3	3.3%
Matriculate	2	4.4%	4	8.9%	6	6.7%
Higher secondary	4	8.9%	4	8.9%	8	8.9%
Graduate	10	22.2%	13	28.9%	23	25.5%
Professional course	21	46.7%	17	37.8%	38	42.2%
Post Graduate	6	13.3%	6	13.3%	12	13.3%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =1.81, table value= 11.1, α= 0.05

The results reveal that majority of the parents (42.2%) were professionally trained. They held professional degrees such as that of engineer, law, professional librarian courses and other similar courses. Apart from this most mothers (22.2%) and fathers (28.9%) were graduates. Calculation of X^2 also reveals insignificant difference in the educational qualification of fathers and mothers.

3. WORKING HOURS OF PARENTS

Table 3 Working hours of parents

Daily working hours	Mother N	%	Father N	%	Total n	%
4-6	22	48.9%	9	20%	31	34.4%
6-8	16	35.6%	13	28.9%	29	32.2%
8-10	4	8.9%	15	33.3%	19	21.2%
10-12	3	6.7%	8	17.8%	11	12.2%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =14.51*, table value= 7.81, α= 0.05 *significant at 1%

The results reveal that majority of the mothers (48.9%) were working 4-6 hours daily while majority of the fathers (33.3%) were working 8-10 hours daily. It was found that those in government job worked for lesser duration as compared to those in private jobs or in business. Also, further the men used to work for longer hours than women in all sorts of job sectors. Calculation of X^2 also reveals that there is a significant difference in the working hours of fathers and mothers.

4. MONTHLY SALARY RECEIVED

Table 4 Monthly salary received

Monthly income (rupee)	Mother n	%	Father n	%
Below 15,000	15	33.33%	5	11.1%
15,000-20,000	25	55.56%	22	48.9%
20,000-25,000	3	6.67%	11	24.4%
25,000 above	2	4.44%	7	15.6%
Total	45	100%	45	100%

X^2 =12.54*, table value= 7.81, α= 0.05 *significant at 1%

The results reveal that majority of the parents i.e. mothers and fathers were earning between 15,000-20,000 separately as their monthly income. Since both husbands and wives were working, so the monthly family income was product of both the incomes. Calculation of X^2 (12.54) also reveals that on the whole the income of fathers was slightly higher than mothers.

5. JOB SATISFACTION

Table 5 Job satisfaction

Level of Job satisfaction	Mother n	%	Father n	%	Total N	%
Extremely satisfied	23	51.1%	26	57.8%	49	54.4%
Very satisfied	12	26.7%	8	17.8%	20	22.2%
Moderate satisfied	7	15.6%	8	17.8%	15	16.7%
Not satisfied	2	4.4%	3	6.7%	5	5.6%
Extremely dissatisfied	1	2.2%	-	-	1	1.1%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =2.256, table value=9.49, α= 0.05

Table 5 reveals that majority of the parents (54.4%) on the whole and separately (mothers 51.1% and fathers 57.8%) were extremely satisfied with their respective jobs. Most of the respondents seemed to be satisfied with their jobs to varying degree only small percent were dissatisfied. Calculation of X^2 reveals that sex of the parents had little to do with their job satisfaction as both of them were satisfied to almost similar levels.

6. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Table 6 Parental Engagement

Level of Engagement	Mother n	%	Father n	%	Total n	%
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moderate	-	-	21	46.67%	21	23.33%
High	45	100%	24	53.33%	81	76.67%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =27.4*, table value= 5.99, α= 0.05 *significant at 1%

The three component of parent involvement that were studied for the present research were engagement, responsibility and accessibility. The parental engagement was measured in terms of time spent in actual one on one interaction with child. Activities requiring direct contact with the child were included under this section. The parental engagement was assessed across 16 items and depending on the scores

obtained the engagement was categorized as low, moderate and high engagement.

The result reveals that all the mothers were highly engaged with their child, as compared to 53.33% of the fathers. The remaining (46.67%) fathers showed moderate engagement. Calculation of X^2 also reveals that mothers were more engaged with their children than the father. The mothers were responsible for cleaning the child, feeding, changing clothes of the children. However, both father and mother performed activities such as reading stories books, watching TV together, dropping child to school etc. on almost an equal basis.

7. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
Table 7 Parental Responsibility

Level of Responsibility	Mother n %		Father n %		Total n %	
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moderate	17	37.78%	18	40%	35	38.89%
High	28	62.22%	27	60%	55	61.11%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =0.047, table value= 5.99, α= 0.05

Majority of the parents (61.11%) scored high on responsibility component of parental involvement while remaining scored (38.89%) moderately. When considered separately 62.22% mothers and 60% fathers were highly responsible. Responsibility component included scheduling activities and being accountable for the child's welfare. It was found that since both of the couples were working, whosoever was available took the responsibility of the child. In spite of their hectic work schedule the parents tried to be responsible to their children. Being responsible had little to with their gender as calculation of X^2 also reveals that there is *insignificant* difference in the responsibility scores of fathers and mothers.

8. PARENTAL ACCESSIBILITY
Table 8 Parental Accessibility

Level of Accessibility	Mother N %		Father n %		Total n %	
Low	-	-	3	6.67%	3	3.33%
Moderate	3	6.67%	15	33.33%	18	20%
High	42	93.33%	27	60%	69	76.67%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =14.26*, table value= 5.99, α= 0.05 *significant at 1%

Accessibility was the third component of paternal involvement, which was assessed for the present research. Accessibility refers to non-direct involvement of parents and included mainly activities to monitor or regulate the child. The result reveals that majority of the mothers (93.33%) were high accessibility to their children, as compared to only 60% of the fathers. None of the mother had low accessibility as compared to 6.67% of fathers showed low accessibility. Calculation of X^2 also reveals that mothers more accessible than the fathers. Mostly the mothers would call from their respective works place to inquire about the child welfare's. But once home, both mothers and fathers kept an eye on child's activity in order to prevent any major mishap.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
Table 9 Parental Involvement

Level of Parental Involvement	Mother n %		Father N %		Total n %	
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moderate	-	-	10	22.22%	10	11.11%
High	45	100%	35	77.78%	80	88.89%
Total	45	100%	45	100%	90	100%

X^2 =11.25*, table value= 5.99, α= 0.05*significant at 1%

Scores obtained on three components namely engagement, responsibility and accessibility were compounded together to form the index for parental involvement. When this was done on the whole all sample mothers showed high involvement as compared to 77.78% of father. None of the parents i.e. father and mother had low involvement but 22.22% of fathers showed moderate involvement. The calculation of X^2 reveals that the mothers were more involved with their children as compared to fathers. The mothers as a whole were found to be more engaged and accessible to their children as compared to fathers. This implies that the sex of the parents is an important prediction of their respective involvement with their child.

10. Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Work Variables
Table 10 Correlation Between Parental Involvement and Work Variables

Items	Parent's Age	Edu.	Job Satis.	Salary Received	Working Hours
Engagement	0.016	0.116	0.213*	0.106	-0.017
Responsibility	0.115	0.063	0.511*	0.597*	-0.65*
Accessibility	0.073	0.917*	0.224*	0.501*	-0.015
Parental involvement	0.038	0.233*	0.566*	0.783*	0.242
Job satisfaction	0.211	0.173	-	0.518*	0.015

***significant at 1%, JS= Job Satisfaction**

Coefficient of correlation was calculated to assess the relationship between parental involvement and parents age, education level; and also between parental involvement and work variables namely job satisfaction, salary received and working hours.

Results show that a positive significant correlation exists between parental education level and accessibility (r = 0.917); and also between education level and parental involvement (r = 0.233). This means as the education level of the parents increased they became more accessible and more involved with their children. However, age of the parents did not significantly influence any of the components of parental involvement.

The job satisfaction of the parent was found to have significant correlation with total parent involvement as well as all the three subcomponents namely, engagement, responsibility and accessibility separately. This result is of primary importance as it shows that more the parents are satisfied with their jobs, more they tried to spend time with their child and get involved with their child. Probably lower job stress level makes parents more available for their children.

As far as the other work variables were concerned, positive significant correlation was found to exist between salary received and parental involvement. Also salary received was significantly correlation with parental responsibility and accessibility. This indicates that the salary is an important determinant of parental behaviour towards their children. probably those who earned well were able to fulfill their parental responsibilities better as well. Salary received was also positively significantly correlated to jab satisfaction. Further, working hours was also positively and significantly correlated with parental involvement but at the same time had significant negative correlation with parental responsibility. This indicates that long working hours may interfere in the manifold parental responsibilities.

Summary and Conclusion:
Parenting is a major developmental task associated with adulthood. Becoming a parent is a privilege accompanied with a sense of responsibility. Taking care of a young child is an activity that requires both concentration as well as effort on part of the parents. A lot of interest is generated in understanding the changing roles of parents in industrialized societies. Now a day, a vast majority of women with young children are in the work force but yet working mothers continue to carry the major responsibility for childcare (Mc Bride & Mills, 1993). In terms of time spent with child, the mother has more opportunities than the father to influence her offspring's psychological growth and behavior. Tradition also favours the mother's influence, since child rearing in our culture is generally recognized, as primarily the mother's privilege and responsibility. Yet, the father also discharges an important role in maintaining

the stability of the family and thus supports the role of mothers. With this as background the present research focuses on variation if any, in the parental involvement according to sex of the parent and further, relates their involvement with their work variables.

The results highlight that inspite of their working status mothers continue to show higher involvement with their young children. They were especially more engaged with their children and were more accessible as well. Mothers tried to participate in everyday activities of their children and were more available. Even though the sample mothers were working outside the home yet they were highly involved with their young ones. The only dimension where there was no significant difference between males and females was their sense of responsibility. Usually, both mothers and fathers had high sense of responsibility towards their children. Thus, these results confirm that parental involvement is definitely influenced by their own sex. Frone (2000) and Scharlach (2001) had also forwarded similar results.

Parental involvement was found to be significantly associated with educational status of the parents. Those who were more educated were found to be more involved and more accessible.

Work variables such as job satisfaction, salary received and working hours do have significant implications for parental involvement. Those parents who were more satisfied with their jobs were more engaged, responsible, accessible and hence more involved. Similarly, as the salary received by the parents increased they became more responsible, accessible and involved. This can probably be because of the comforts both tangible and intangible associated with a handsome salary. Working hours were also related with parental involvement, but at the same time those parents who spent higher duration at work turned to be less responsible probably because of paucity of time.

In sum, not only the parental demographic variables but also their work variables are determining factors shaping their subsequent involvement with their young children. There is a need to understand that parental involvement is a complex phenomenon which is influenced by multitude of factors. Since, work is an inseparable part of the modern lives, therefore, it continues to exert significant influence even on parent-child relationship.

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