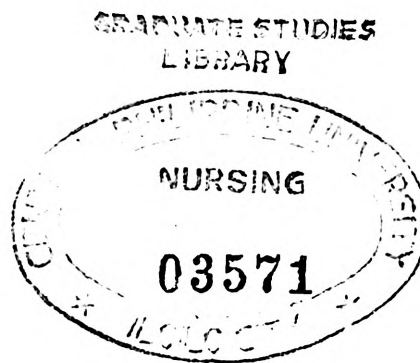


**MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD CARE: ATTITUDE AND EXPERIENCES
OF MALE FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS IN SELECTED
SCHOOLS IN ILOILO**



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by:

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine fathers' attitude towards child care and extent of participation in child care activities. Specifically, this investigation determined the fathers' characteristics in terms of age, family income, number of children, household size and employment status of spouse; their attitude toward child care and their extent of involvement in child care activities; the relationship between each variables and their attitude towards child care and their extent of involvement.

This is a descriptive relational study that used the sample survey design. The respondents were 80 married male faculty and staff who have zero to six-year old children. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. FGDs were also conducted to gain insight on experiences on child care of fathers.

Major Findings of the Study

Most of the fathers of children in this study were between 31 to 40 years of age and had a family income between Php10,000 to 20,000. The mean income was Php20,618.60. They had two children on the average and their households had six or more members. The wives of most were employed and working outside the home.

Most of the fathers had very favorable attitude towards child care and had high participation in child care, in which they spent an average of 37 hours a week. Fathers preferred to play with their children, put them to sleep, held, carried and fed them.

Fathers' attitudes varied according to employment status of spouse. Fathers with working wives tended to have more favorable attitude than those whose wives were not working.

On the other hand, age, family income, number of children, and household size did not influence fathers attitude towards child care. Irrespective of age, income, number of children and size of household, attitude towards child care was very favorable.

The fathers' age was significantly associated with their extent of participation in child care. Younger fathers tended to spend more time in child care than older fathers. On the average, younger fathers spent 45.10 hours per week, while the older spent only 27.65 hours a week.

Family income, number of children and household size, however were not significantly related to the extent of participation of fathers in child care activities.

Fathers whose spouses were working were found to have slightly higher participation in child care compared to respondents whose wives stayed at home. However, the relational analysis did not yield a significant relationship between employment status of spouse and father's extent of participation in child care.

Fathers who were found to have a very favorable attitude towards child care were identified to have higher participation in child care activities. As the attitude becomes more favorable, the time spent in child care increases.

Conclusion

The results indicate that fathers' employment status of the spouse is significantly associated with attitude towards child care. However, contrary to popular beliefs fathers' age, family income, number of children and household size, have no significant bearing on their attitude toward child care.

Age significantly influences fathers' extent of participation in child care. On the other hand family income, number of children, household size and employment status of spouse do not. The hypothesis therefore that socio demographic factors are associated with men's extent of participation in child care cannot be supported by the findings of this study

Attitude toward child care is significantly associated with father's involvement in child care. The fathers' extent of involvement in caring for their children seem to be dependent on their willingness to increase or decrease their participation. This finding supports Brehm and Kassin (1996) position that attitude is an important determinant of behavior.

The findings in this study further lend support to the role theory, which stipulates socially prescribed roles of men and women. The nurturing role is usually women's domain, while men are socially expected to be economic provider, thus their participation in child care activities is usually not as much as that of the women. Their exposure to new concepts of gender equality and other gender issues may have improved their attitudes towards gender roles, and consequently affected their involvement in child care, however, their involvement has been limited.

Recommendations

To further increase the prospects for the consideration and participation of men from all sectors in child care, it is recommended that:

1. Fathers should be encouraged to attend seminars and lectures on how to effectively perform their role in child care. They should be involved in information campaigns promoting fathers involvement in child care.
2. Younger fathers should further develop positive attitude towards child care by joining support groups that help men get involved in taking care of their children. They can also be involved as peer educators to encourage their older male friends to attend child care activities.
3. Programs for the often ignored father's role that will utilize father's social network including their (grand) parents and peers should be developed.
4. Recognizing the image problem of men participating in child care activities, concepts and terms being used should be modified and changed to reflect non-gender bias.
5. Information on different fatherhood approaches and circumstances (e.g., strategies and available support services to each), should be compiled and disseminated in appropriate ways and places (e.g., high schools, libraries, neighborhood centers).
6. Employers should give importance to fatherhood by promoting and implementing provisions for paternity leave, leave for sick children and father's day off.
7. There is a need to promote greater consciousness among women on the role of fathers in child care.

8. Educational programs and materials should encourage more women and mothers to support male involvement in child care. Husbands and wives should attend seminars and workshops together so that men's negative attitudes, misconceptions or vague ideas about child care can be corrected or avoided.

9. A study should be conducted to find out their preferred roles at this stage and why they tend to spend lesser time in child care. A study on varied populations and including other socio demographic factors as determinants of child care should be conducted.