



Exploring the Influence of Working Parents towards Girl Child

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the influence of parents' working status and gender on their attitude towards a girl child. Specifically, the researchers hypothesized that parents in households where both individuals are working would exhibit a more favorable attitude towards their girl child compared to families where only the father is employed and the mother remains a homemaker. To investigate this, a sample was selected incidentally, comprising 260 mothers and 260 fathers. The sample was carefully constructed to maintain an equal distribution of parents based on their working status: half from families where both parents worked, and half from families where only the father worked (with the mother being a homemaker). The Attitude towards Girls Child Scale, developed by Dani in 2009, was the instrument used to measure attitudes. The findings of the study confirmed the research hypothesis concerning the role of parents' occupational status

in shaping their attitude towards a girl child. This suggests that the working status of parents is indeed significantly associated with their attitudes towards daughters. However, the study did not find a significant role for the gender of the parents themselves in influencing attitudes towards a girl child. Furthermore, no significant interaction effect between the parents' gender and their occupational status was observed in relation to their attitude.

Key Words

Working Status of Parents, Attitude, Girl Child.

Introduction

The Indian scenario is not very much different. Since long through history, it has been observed that females are ascribed a lower social status in man-dominating society. Attitude of people toward girl child is considerable less favourable than male child. As per 2001 census sex ratio in India is a 933/1000 males, which continues to be significantly adverse towards women and is the lowest amongst 10 most popular countries in world. Most alarming is decrease in CSR (Child Sex Ratio). In Punjab, the number was least (793) in 2001, followed by Haryana (820) and Chandigarh (845). Advances in technology and diagnostic facilities have opened up avenue for girl haters leading to serious disturbance in sex ratio as a result of female feticide. Desire for male child manifests so bluntly that parents have no qualms about repeated, closely spaced pregnancies, premature deaths, and even terminating child before it is born. Birth of a female child is received as a curse with economic and social liability. In each corner of India, girls face discrimination; they often

receive less food than boys, have less access to schooling and unlike boys they are made to do long hours of labour beginning at a tender age.

Females have often been object of strong, persistent stereotypes (Aube & Koestner, 1992). For example, in many cultures, males are assumed to possess such desirable traits as decisiveness, forcefulness, confidence, ambition, and rationality. In contrast, the corresponding assumptions about females include less desirable traits such as passivity, submissiveness, indecisiveness, emotionality, and dependence (Deanx, 1993; and Unger, 1994).

This attitude towards girl child is determined by various factors. Working status and gender of parents are among such important factors and are considered in the present research.

Working status of parents seems to determine their attitude toward girl child. Family environment of both working parents is certainly different from the family where only father is earning and mother is purely a homemaker. Due to greater exposure to out world and realization of the importance of girl in family upliftment, it is reasonable to believe that both working parents show more favourable attitude toward girl child than in the condition where only father earns and mother is purely a homemaker.

Gender of parents is also an important factor in attitude toward girl child. It is generally observed, mother are more supportive towards their daughters and they don't show biases between their daughters and sons as strong as fathers. Sharma et al. (2007) observed that more than 50% of mothers want their daughters education level to be up to post-graduation level and 95% of mothers would allow their daughters to select subjects of their own choice and take admission in any college, even out of state.

Problem & Hypothesis

The present research deals with working status and gender of parents as the determinants of attitude towards girl child. For the purpose, the specific problems undertaken and relevant hypotheses are described here below:

Problems

1. The first problem of the research pertains to role of working status of parents in their attitude towards girl child. More specifically, the problem is whether, 'Both Working Parents' and 'Only Father Working' groups differ in regard to their roles in their attitude towards girl child.
2. The second problem of the research pertains to role of gender of parents on their attitude towards their girl child. In other words, the problem is whether mother and father differ in regard to their attitude towards girl child?
3. The last problem of the research pertains to interaction effect of working status and gender of parents on their attitude towards their girl child.

Hypothesis

1. It is hypothesized that the two differential groups would differ in respect of their attitude towards girl child. In other words, it is expected that parents (both working) would show more favourable attitude towards girl child in comparison to those parents where only father works and mother is purely a homemaker.
2. It is hypothesized that both the parents would differ in respect of their attitude toward girl child. More specifically, it is expected that mothers would show more favourable attitude toward their girl child than fathers.
3. It is assumed that there would exist genuine interaction effect of working status and gender of parents on their attitude toward girl child.

Methodology

Sample

A final sample of 260 mother and 260 fathers were selected incidentally from a larger population. Care was taken to select equal number of parents ($n = 130$) from two working status groups i.e., both parents working and only father working.

Table 1: Details of Final Sample

Parent's Gender	Parent's Working Status		Total
	Both Working	Father Working/ Mother Homemaker	
Father	$n = 65$	$n = 65$	130
Mother	$n = 65$	$n = 65$	130
Total	130	130	260

Tools

"Attitude Toward Girl Child Test" developed and standardized by Dani (2009) was used to measure attitude of parents toward girl child.

Design & Procedure

A 2x2 factorial design was used to study independent and joint roles of working status and gender of parents in their attitude towards girl child.

After selecting the final sample of 260 both working parents and 260 only father working parents test of attitude toward girl child was administered on them. Care was taken to maintain mother-father ratio as 1:1.

Results & Discussion

The author intended to study roles of working status of parents in their attitude towards girl child. The obtained data are summarized in Table 2.

1. Role of Working Status

The first problem of the research pertained to role of working status of parents in their attitude towards girl child. It was hypothesized that parents (both working) would exhibit more favourable attitude towards girl child than parents where only father is working.

Table 2: Statistical Details of Sub-Groups

Parent's Gender	Parent's Working Status						Mean
	Both Working			Father Working/ Mother Homemaker			
Father	n	=	130	n	=	130	108.065
	M	=	108.4	M	=	107.67	
	x ²	=	2558.128	x ²	=	2278.837	
Mother	n	=	130	n	=	130	108.0275
	M	=	108.865	M	=	107.32	
	x ²	=	2252.069	x ²	=	2086.672	
Mean	108.5725			107.52			108.04626

Table 3: Summary of Two-Way ANOVA

Sources	SS	df	V	F-ratio	Remarks
Between 2 Occupational Groups (OG)	144.00	1	144.00	4.650	P<.01
Between 2 Gender Groups (GG)	0.18	1	0.18	0.005	NS
Interaction Effect (OG x GG)	8.96	1	8.96	0.250	NS
Within Sets (Error Term)	18351.40	516	35.57		
Total	18504.54	519			

A perusal of Table 2 clarifies that average attitude scores of 'both working' parents ($M = 108.5725$) is higher than that of 'only father working' group ($M = 107.52$). The obtained F-ratio ($F = 4.65$, Table 3) is significant at .01 level of significance for 1 and 516 degrees of freedom, indicating thereby a genuine difference between the two working status groups in regard to their attitude towards girl child. More specifically, it can be concluded that both working parents truly show more favourable attitude towards girl child in comparison to those where only father works.

It seems that in the condition of both working parents there is more exposure to outer dynamically changing world. Certainly now-a-days girls are getting egalitarian status. In comparison to past, quite higher number of parents are willingly permit their girl children to go for higher education and in jobs. The effective media too is plying its vital roles in educating these parents who are already prone to change themselves with changing norms of modern society. In contrast, in the condition of only father working, the mother is quite deprived of such exposures and is prone to maintain traditional roles for girl child like her won, which may block the development of girl child. In such family, usually girl child has been considered a burden to the family. These conditions may lead to possess less favourable or unfavourable attitude towards girl child.

2. Role of Gender of Parents

Second problem of the research pertains to role of gender of parents in their attitude towards girl child. It was hypothesized that, mothers would show more favourable attitude toward girl child than fathers.

A perusal of Table 2 clarifies that, average attitude score of father ($M = 108.065$) is almost similar to that of mothers ($M = 108.0275$). the obtained F-ratio for this difference ($F = 0.005$, $P > .05$, Table 3) is not significant at any acceptable level of significance for 1 and 516 degrees of freedom which provides empirical ground to conclude that fathers and mothers do not differ truly in respect of their attitude towards girl child.

The modern society emphasizes highly on achievement and regards high for such people irrespective of their gender. Education too has played its vital role to change traditional role of males and females bringing both gender groups at the same platform. The mother either in the house or at job, has become aware about their own upliftment and that is the reason the mothers and fathers do not differ in regard to their attitudes towards girl child.

3. Interaction Effect

The last problems of the research pertained to interaction effect of working status and gender of parents in their attitude towards girl child.

It is clear from Table 3 that the obtained interaction F-ratio ($F = 0.25$) is not significant at any acceptable level of significance. It can be concluded that, the two independent variables i.e., working status, and gender of parents do not play any genuine joint role on their attitude towards girl child rather they are independent in this regard.

Conclusion

Working parents, irrespective of gender, show more positive attitudes towards girl children. Gender alone does not significantly influence attitude. There is no combined interaction effect between working status and gender. These results underscore the progressive shift in societal attitudes, particularly among working families, towards valuing and supporting the girl child equally.

Reference

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