

Paternal Participation in School Activities in a University Laboratory Preschool in the Philippines

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Abstract

This research was conducted at a progressive laboratory preschool of a national university in the Philippines. It examined paternal participation through the fathers' attendance in seven school-wide events and an in-depth interview. It aimed to set apart school activities which, fathers prefer / less prefer to attend and identified variables that influence paternal participation. From the pool of 134 fathers who participated in the study, those with high and low attendance were identified and fifteen participants randomly selected from each group were interviewed about their perspectives on child-rearing and preschool involvement. The teachers of their children were also interviewed regarding the nature of the fathers' participation. The results suggest that activities which involved the whole family are preferred over those which required parental participation only. Younger fathers (those in their mid-thirties) and working in the same university and whose children are between 0-2 years old were more likely to be participative in school activities.

Key words : paternal participation, parent involvement, Filipino fathers, preschool parent activities

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Introduction

Across time and culture, fathers are gradually undergoing metamorphosis. The perception that fathers are limited to the peripheries with regards to childcare and education has slowly been replaced by the idea that they can be as effective as mothers. Men have been observed to become more involved in raising not only the family but also their offspring. One can now observe more men caring for their children both within and outside the home. In a 1998 study by Berger, he found that the roles of a father in children's development include being a model, encourager, guider, protector, care provider, breadwinner, teacher, play partner, standard setter and teacher. This continuous discovery and rediscovery of fathering roles for the past decades ignited researchers to investigate this phenomenon. Certainly, many researches, mostly Western (e.g. Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Berger, 1998; Keller & Zach, 2002; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; etc.), dealing with paternal involvement in early childhood care and education have flourished over the years. Rohner and Veneziano in a 2001 meta-analysis research, found that the father's influence on children's social competence is as great as, and sometimes, even greater than the mother's influence. Likewise, active father involvement is found to be closely linked to academic achievement during preschool and school-aged years. The National Center for Education Statistics, in its National Household Education Survey in 1998, concluded that children do better in school when their fathers are involved in the educational process, regardless of whether their father lived with them. On the contrary, there has been a dearth of Philippine-based researches in family life and child development, specifically in father involvement, hence the need for this research.

This new vein in research aims to strengthen the complementary functions of both fathering and mothering roles in the life of the child. Furthermore, this emerging trend on the study of fathers does not necessarily mean that mothers' contributions to the child's development need no more exploration, but rather, it contends that fathers have so much to contribute as well.

Given this increased proportion of father involvement, it is high time for individuals who work with and educate children to reach out to the fathers and other male role figures. Concerted efforts should be done to tap this invaluable human resource in quest for the children's optimum development and well being. This study gives due credit to the Filipino fathers who put much value for their families and children. Thus, this present study hopes to

fill the gap by defining father and father involvement in relation to school activities of his preschool child as well as the factors that affect this involvement. It seeks to determine the extent by which Filipino fathers were involved in their child's school. Specifically, the study aims to answer the question, "*What are school activities which fathers attend?*" and "*What are the characteristics of fathers who tend to be more involved in their preschool children's school activities, as well as the characteristics of their wife and children?*" Using Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, this study discusses paternal participation and involvement in school activities of their preschool children in relation to the developmental tasks outlined particularly in Erikson's seventh stage *Generativity versus Stagnation*.

Methodology

Research Participants

This descriptive study attempted to determine father involvement with their child in terms of attendance and participation in the school-related activities for one school year in a university laboratory preschool. It included 134 fathers whose children were enrolled at the preschool. The mean age of these fathers is 38.26 years. Majority of these fathers completed college education while nearly one-third of them completed advanced education (i.e., MA, MS, PhD, MD and/or LLB). Moreover, majority of these fathers are employed in private institutions and only about one-third is employed by this national university.

Research Instruments

Two instruments which were used during the second phase of the data collection were developed to meet the purpose of the study. The first instrument is a 13-item questionnaire for the fathers and the second instrument was a six-item questionnaire for the preschool teachers. For the first questionnaire, the questions included demographic information about the couple, such as age, number of years married, educational attainment, and occupation/nature of work. Succeeding questions like time spent with their children, as well as activities done together as

a family followed the demographics. Their fathering tasks were also discussed. Similar to self-rating, the father was asked to assess his participation in school activities, and which activities he likes and dislikes. The reasons for his involvement were then solicited.

To confirm the responses of the fathers regarding their participation in their child's school activities, the class teachers of the children were also provided with a six-item questionnaire. This probed into the fathers' participation in class-related activities such as bringing and fetching their child to/from school and replying in class e-groups. Open-ended statements followed, such as whether the identified father consults with the teacher regarding the behavior and progress of their child; helps as resource speaker, serves as driver and/or chaperone during field trips of the class, among others.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection had two phases. The first phase involved a review of documents particularly attendance of fathers in major school-wide activities. This allowed the researchers to identify what preschool activities the fathers joined. Basic Information Sheets containing the socio-demographic data about the family was also reviewed for those who consented to participate in the second phase of the data collection. This portion involved the conduct of two surveys to further examine the involvement of the fathers in their preschool children's school activities. The first was a face-to-face interview with the fathers while the second was a paper-and-pen survey for the teachers of the children.

Since Phase One called for the identification of fathers with high and poor attendance, Parents' Attendance Sheets were collected from the respective teachers of the nine preschool classes. The seven major center-wide activities were: First Parent-Teacher Conference (June), Acquaintance Party (July), Second Parent-Teacher Conference (August), Curriculum Presentation (August), First Parent Education Seminar (September), Family Day (October), and the annual Christmas Program (December). The attendance of each father for each activity was tallied to account for their presence or absence.

The researchers then considered fathers who attended five to seven activities, as *highly participative* fathers; three to four activities, as *mid-participative* fathers; and those who attended none to two activities as *least participative* fathers. This grouping was done to

categorize paternal involvement for this study. Since the fathers with high attendance were only 17, all were scheduled for an interview. Meanwhile, 15 out of 60 fathers with low attendance were randomly selected for Phase Two. This interview portion was deemed necessary in order to elicit more personal insights and information on fathering.

The Basic Information Sheets and Academic Records of the children during the same school year were also reviewed and documented to create a profile of the children in terms of age, gender, birth order and enrollment status (e.g., whether an old returning or a new student).

Letters were then sent out to the 32 identified fathers but only 29 fathers agreed to join the study. However, difficulty in setting interview schedules further reduced to 21 the number of fathers who actually participated. The interview took place for two months and they revolved primarily around family structure, home and work schedule, family and special father-child activities, as well as experiences of and perspectives on father roles.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used to analyze data gathered from the instruments and procedures. Frequencies, percentages and means were used to review the attendance sheets of the fathers in the school-wide activities. Data in the Basic Information Sheets and Academic Records were used to describe the profile of all fathers throughout the given school year and the responses were categorized, coded and were also subjected to frequency counts.

Answers in the interview guide, as well as in the teachers' questionnaires were analyzed based on recurring themes and patterns. The codes and categories used to examine the nature and level of fathers' involvement were generated from their responses. Analysis of the data to characterize the highly-participative and least-participative fathers was mainly descriptive and exploratory.

Findings

This research focused on the attendance and participation of fathers in school activities of

their preschool children as well as the factors, both internal and external to the fathers, which affected their involvement. The results suggested that fathers, regardless of their demographic characteristics, give high regard to the roles they play in their children’s lives. Whether they see themselves as providers, nurturers, or models of good behavior, they all believe that being a father is something that has to be taken seriously. All of them likewise believe that one of their primary goals as a parent is to provide their children with good education, and that they play a significant role in this educational process. Still, these parents know that they have limitations in performing their duties as parents especially when it comes to participation in school activities of their preschoolers. The characteristics of the fathers, mothers and children that affect their participation in school activities are outlined below.

Table 1. *Father-Related Characteristics*

Characteristics	Least Participative (n = 77)			Highly Participative			Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	F	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	
Age (in years)							
20’s	15	75.0	3	5	25.0	1	0.767
30’s	38	77.6	2	11	22.4	2	
40’s and up	7	87.5	1	1	12.5	3	
Education							
Elementary	7	100.0	1	0	0.0	4	0.202
High School	35	81.4	2	8	18.6	3	
College	17	68.0	3	8	32.0	2	
Advance	1	50.0	4	1	50.0	1	
Employment							
University Faculty	8	66.7	6	4	33.3	1	0.822
University Staff	7	70.0	5	3	30.0	2	
Gov’t EE	6	85.7	2	1	14.3	5	
Private EE	26	81.3	3	6	18.8	4	
OFW	3	100.0	1	0	0.0	6	
Self-employed	9	75.0	4	3	25.0	3	
Unemployed	1	100.0	1	0	0.0	6	

NOTE: % within Characteristics

Among the primary factors considered in the present study are the characteristics of the father, the mother and their preschool child. Tables 1 and 2 show the demographic characteristics of the fathers and mothers, respectively including their age range, educational attainment and employment. It also shows the rank per group of their involvement in school

activities of their preschool children. Based on Table 1, one could glean that highly participative fathers are employed by the University as faculty members (33%) or as staff members (30%), as such, their work place is within the same campus as the Laboratory Preschool.

Table 2. *Mother-Related Characteristics*

Characteristics	Least Participative (n = 77)			Highly Participative			Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	
Age (in years)							
20's	20	69.0	3	9	31.0	1	0.261
30's	37	82.2	2	8	17.8	2	
40's and up	3	100.0	1	0	0.0	3	
Education							
Elementary	4	80.0	1	1	20.0	4	0.310
High School	34	79.1	2	9	20.9	3	
College	22	78.6	3	6	21.4	2	
Advance	0	0.0	4	1	100.0	1	
Employment							
University Faculty	13	76.5	3	4	23.5	3	0.208
University Staff	19	95.0	1	1	5.0	5	
Gov't EE	6	75.0	4	2	25.0	2	
Private EE	10	58.8	5	7	41.2	1	
Self-employed	3	75.0	4	1	25.0	2	
Unemployed	9	81.8	2	2	18.2	4	

NOTE: % within Characteristics

On the other hand, Table 3 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the children including the age, gender, birth order, and enrollment status at the center (i.e., old or new). The Center accommodates children from 3 months to 5 years old. Ranked values in Table 3 show that more participative fathers have female children at the Center or are either an only child.

Attendance in School Activities

Every school has a list of regular activities. For the given academic year, the University Laboratory Preschool conducted seven school activities that necessitated parental

Table 3. *Child-Related Characteristics*

Characteristics	Least Participative			Highly Participative			Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	
<i>(n = 77)</i>							
Age (in years)							
0-2	10	62.5	4	6	37.5	1	0.352
3	18	85.7	1	3	14.3	4	
4	19	82.6	2	4	17.4	3	
5-6	13	76.5	3	4	23.5	2	
Sex							
Male	28	84.8	1	5	15.2	2	0.204
Female	32	72.7	2	12	27.3	1	
Birth Order							
Only child	12	60.0	6	8	40.0	1	0.246
Eldest	12	85.7	3	2	14.3	4	
Youngest	28	87.5	2	4	12.5	5	
Second	4	66.7	5	2	33.3	2	
Third	3	75.0	4	1	25.0	3	
Fourth & up	1	100.0	1	0	0.0	6	
Status							
Old	35	83.3	1	7	16.7	2	0.210
New	25	71.4	2	10	28.6	1	

NOTE: % within Characteristics

involvement. These activities along with the attendance of the fathers and the ranking as to the most attended to the least attended are listed below. These events are listed in the order as they occurred in the school calendar, such as the First Parent Teacher Conference was held in June, followed by the Acquaintance Party in July, and so on.

Table 4. *Fathers' Attendance in School Activities*

Activity	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
First Parent-Teacher Conference	58	43.28	3
Acquaintance Party	59	44.03	2
Curriculum Presentation	39	29.10	6
Second Parent-Teacher Conference	33	24.63	7
Parent Education Seminar 1	47	35.07	5
Family Day	55	48.51	4
Christmas Program	82	61.19	1

N = 134

Activities which involved the whole family (Acquaintance Party, Family Day and the Christmas Program) were highly attended. It is interesting to note that the First Parent-Teacher Conference, although not a family activity was well-attended because as reported, the parents wanted to meet their child's teacher, share their expectations and visit their child's classroom. Meanwhile, activities which had less attendance were those which involved only the parents and these are the Second Parent-Teacher Conference, Curriculum Presentation and Parent Education Seminar 1.

Discussion

This study was conducted to examine father involvement through their attendance and an interview in order to identify variables that influence their participation in school activities at a University laboratory preschool in the Philippines.

Based on the findings of the study, fathers believe that their role is no longer just confined to providing for the material needs of the family. They also see themselves as nurturers of their children. Among the tasks that these fathers reportedly enjoy doing include preparing meals, being their playmates, assisting them in school work, bringing them to and from school, as well as sharing stories with them. These fathers likewise believe that while those tasks may be considered a handful already on top of their regular jobs, many still find that what they are doing for their children are not enough. Thus, they yearn for more time to be spent with their children. This suggests that indeed, fathers are progressively more conscious of their participation in their children's lives both at home and in school as the latter continue to grow and develop. In this study, father-related, mother-related, and child-related characteristics were examined in order to see which ones encourage the participation and involvement of fathers in the school activities of their young children.

Father-Related Characteristics

The findings suggest that (1) age, and (2) being employed by the University are traits that are related to the fathers' high participation in school activities of their children.

The results indicate that generally fathers are becoming more participative in their children's preschool activities. It further suggests that younger fathers are indeed increasingly more involved in caring after their children than their older counterparts did. This supports the earlier findings that young Filipino fathers are seeking more participation when it comes to caring tasks and inculcating good manners and conduct towards their young children (e.g., Aguilin-Dalisay, 1983; David, 1994; Go, Imperio and Juan, 1998; Medina, 2001; de Leon, 2010). This may be because of their openness to shared parenting as well as the availability of more information on parenting for younger parents. As one father disclosed,

“My dad is [sic] strict...like a military man. But it's ok, I try to understand. Right now, the environment has changed. I am not really changing because I'm not sure if I'm doing it right but I'm pursuing these things. I want to be there for the kids, to provide for their needs...I have to keep up with my children”. – **Bill**

Fathers who participated in this research, whether highly or poorly involved in school activities reported that spending time with their children in playing, studying, and even in doing child-care tasks such as feeding an infant child in the middle of the night is a source of joy and affirmation that they are doing their fathering roles.

With the advent of information technology, parents these days are no longer limited to parenting by trial-and-error or by their own experiences with their parents. Self-help books and parenting tips from the internet are readily available for parenting education even in one's handheld gadget. Thus, it is not surprising to see that young fathers who grew up in the age of information would also be the ones to recognize that their participation in child-rearing as well as in their children's education is beneficial for the latter's growth and development. Those who were first time fathers shared that when their wives were nearing their due date, they would surf the web and read books for tips on how to care not only for their children but also on how to support their wives who just gave birth.

Being employed by the University either as an academic or administrative member is the second trait of fathers who are more involved in their children's school activities. These fathers enjoy free tuition fees for their children enrolled in the laboratory preschool and pay only the miscellaneous fees with is roughly 67% off compared to the total fees paid by non-University employees. This is part of their privileges as employees of the University.

However, more than this privilege they experience, the researchers believe that the proximity of these fathers' work place to the center is the actual reason for their increased participation. Since these parents have the convenience of taking a quick break from work to attend to a Parent-Teacher Conference (PTC) or to drive their children to and from school, is truly an edge for these parents as opposed to those who work outside the campus. This was validated during the interview when they verbalized that it is very convenient to have their children study near their workplace because they are given the opportunity to spend more time with them. One parent even said that his most intimate conversations with his daughter happen in the car when he drives her to and from school.

Meanwhile, another father shared that it was easier for her 4-year-old daughter to adjust to being in school for the first time because she was aware that he works just a few buildings away. This finding is highlighted in the research of Garvis, Pendergast and Kanasa (2013) that proximity of the child care facility was a main concern for parents.

Carlisle, Stanley and Kemple (2005) concluded that parental involvement is based on the following factors: parents' cultural background, the quality of parents' previous educational experiences, family structure, parents' work schedule, teachers' attitudes about parent involvement, teachers' expectations for parent involvement and school's efforts. The fathers in this study expressed that they are willing to learn about their children's performance in school and on how they can help facilitate their children's growth and development. As shared by one father who is a thoracic surgeon,

"I schedule my surgical works early in the morning, say 3, 4 or 5am. That way, when my children wake up, I'll be there to start the day with them. I'll drive them to school and while they're there, I do my clinic hours. Then I'd pick them up right after. Unless it's an emergency, I make it a point to be present for my children all the time". – **Philip**

This father sees his role in raising his children as something very important. In fact, the teacher of his children also shared in the survey that he and his wife would really exert utmost effort to be present not only in activities set by the preschool but also to volunteer in classroom activities by being resource persons to the class or by driving for the class during field trips. One father also shared how he wants to teach his children how to make right decisions for themselves as well as to develop study habits which are essential for a good

future. Apparently, this observation that fathers exhibit high physical and emotional involvement with their children is comparable with the research findings of Tan (1994) and Sta. Ana (2001) which were conducted among Filipino fathers in an urban setting.

Mother-Related Characteristics

Mother-related characteristics are often investigated when looking into paternal involvement in childcare. In this study, the age, educational attainment and employment were considered as the possible characteristics that may affect the fathers' involvement in school activities of their preschool children. By inspection of Table 2, the ranked characteristics suggest that congruent to the earlier findings, young mothers, with at least a college education, have husbands who are more involved and highly participative in their children's school activities. It may then be inferred that in terms of education and stability of career, these young women and their husbands are more accomplished and are thereby reduced of stress to earn a living for the family. Thus, they can spend more time with their children unlike their counterparts who have to work more hours to earn for the family.

However, it is import to note that while these characteristics ranked highest, their relationship with paternal participation appear to be insignificant. This may be because rather than demographic characteristics, what may be more significantly related to paternal participation is the type and amount of support that wives provide to their husbands when caring for their children. During the interview, fathers from both groups reported that when their wives give them opportunities to be spend time with their children, they are able to establish closer father-child emotional bonds. One father intimated during the interview that,

“At first my wife just wanted me to bring our son to school and fetch him after. I told myself ‘What the heck, I’m free anyway.’ I would just routinely bring him to and from school then drive through a fast food and eat inside the car. Before I knew it we were already singing together on the way home. Then I realized that I now know my son better. I wouldn’t have known that if my wife didn’t require me to be my son’s driver.” - **Ron**

Needless to say, he has low participation in his child's school activities during his regular work schedule. At the time of the interview, this father was having his term break from the

school where he was teaching. He added that when he had classes, it is usually the child's caregiver who would bring his son to and from school. With his experience in the two months that he was off from work, he said that he felt so much closer to his son than before. This may be supported by the findings of Go, Imperio and Juan (1998) which suggest that mothers play a big part in the involvement of the fathers in their parenting role, such that when mothers are supportive, then fathers are more likely to become more involved with their preschool children.

Child-Related Characteristics

Meanwhile, with respect to child-related characteristics, it appears that age, although rather weak, is a factor that may be correlated to the degree of participation of fathers in school activities of their children. This may be attributed to the latter's tender age – fathers tend to participate more actively in the affairs of their children when they are in infancy and toddlerhood (Yogman, 1983; Takeuchi, Uehara, & Suzuki, 1982 as cited in Ishii-Kuntz, 1994). This is supported in the interview when a first-time father of a child in the infant's class revealed that,

“I want to be here. If I can be here in school with her every day, I will do it. I want to be there when she takes her first steps, say her first words...She may not understand it yet when I tell her that I love her but I'm sure she'll feel it with my actions.” - **Miggy**

This has been observed as well in literatures on family among Filipinos where fathers tend to be more participative in the lives of their children from birth through preschool years since they see these years as crucial in development and in establishing close relationships with their children (e.g., Aguilin-Dalisay, 1983; David, 1994; Liwag, de la Cruz & Macapagal, 1999; Medina, 2001; de Leon, 2010).

With respect to ranked values, child-characteristics such as (1) gender, (2) number of siblings and (3) enrolment status in the preschool (i.e., first time to enroll) are those that ranked first in relation to the fathers' participation in the school activities of these children. It should be noted that fathers of children in the younger group (i.e., 0-2 years) and older group (i.e., 5-6years), female, and are new to the program participated more in school activities of

their children. For children who are new to the program, whether in the younger or older group, their fathers were still in the process of familiarizing themselves with the progressive approach to education and are excited of the novelty of being fathers in a school setting. This laboratory preschool offers an integrated curriculum, which is different from most learning centers in the Philippines, and its unfamiliarity triggers curiosity among these fathers thus leading to increased participation in school activities. Akin to this observation were the findings of Kyoung (2012), where laboratory school parents articulated that they attended school activities in order to learn more about state-of-the-art practices emanating from researches done by its University faculty.

Consequently, fathers of those in the older group, whether or not new to the program, may be participative in school activities because their children will soon be “moving up to the big school” in the following year. Since fathers who have high participation were also the ones who have high educational attainment and have wives who are equally educated, they are as supportive of their children’s education not simply as financial or material providers but as guides and as tutors as well. This was confirmed during the interview when the fathers reported that they were the ones who would patiently tutor their child when the latter signifies difficulty in reading or handling numbers. One father expressed his concerns in influencing his 4-year-old daughter to be interested in pre-academic activities like the alphabet and numbers but she seemed not ready for it yet and this obviously worries him. He disclosed,

“This is the first time that my daughter went to school. We thought that she would eventually learn to enjoy reading as much as she did artworks and watching TV. We don’t want to force her into academic stuff but she must find a way to get used to them soon. That’s why we’re having a difficult time deciding on what activity we’ll let her do over the summer break...”. – **Bill**

Moreover, they were the ones who would sit with their child in preparing for entrance examinations to big schools. As they see the value of their own education in their lives, these fathers share their visions for good education with their youngsters.

Single-child fathers are more participative in school activities for very obvious reasons, that is, they want to be present at every milestone in the life of their child as they recounted during the face-to-face interview.

Fathers of female children likewise seem to be more present in school activities of their

daughters than those who have sons. This may be attributed to the cultural custom in a collaborative tradition typical of Asians which is being more attentive towards daughters because they “need” added care than sons do. Several researches on gender socialization among Filipino children and families (Liwag, de la Cruz & Macapagal, 1999; Aguilin-Dalisay, Mendoza, Mirafelix, Yacat, Sto. Domingo & Bambico, 2000) likewise illustrated this observation. The findings of Ishii-Kuntz (1994) were similar in that Japanese fathers tend to interact more and be protective of their daughters from birth to adulthood than they do with sons. Meanwhile, Rothbart (1971 as cited in Bronfenbrenner & Mahoney, 1975) and Keller & Zach (2002) suggest that both mothers and fathers prefer daughters in terms of presence and primary care as well as face-to-face exchange respectively. In addition, Kindlon and Thompson (2000) asserted that fathers were more indulgent and affectionate towards girls, which may be one reason for higher paternal participation.

Fathers’ Attendance in School Activities

As to the types of activities that the fathers attended, there was a preference towards family activities as shown in the Attendance Sheets and substantiated during the interview. These were the Christmas Program, Family Day and Acquaintance Party. This predilection was primarily because it is fun and it involved doing activities together with their children. They verbalized that were inclined not to attend events which require parental participation only especially when these are done during Saturdays because they would rather spend time with their children than leave them. Some fathers also conveyed that they do not have nannies or sitters who could take care of their children when they are out with their wives. Similarly, Soyoun (2012) found the same reason for parents not participating in school activities. Still, most of the fathers in this study agree that there are non-negotiable activities such as parent-teacher conferences because it is their distinct opportunity to know their children’s progress in school.

Paternal Participation and Generativity

Among the tasks required of adults, as suggested in Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial

Development (Crain, 2005), an adult should be able to do the following in order to achieve generativity instead of stagnation – (1) “*reach out to others in ways that give to and guide the next generation, (2) extend commitment beyond self typically realized through child rearing, and (3) establish mentoring relationships with other family members* (www.pcc.edu, n.d.)” Regarding the results of the study presented earlier, one would realize that the fathers who participated in this research are approaching the generativity or the need to nurture and guide young people. This need to contribute to the next generation is manifested in the way they care and communicate their concerns for their own children’s welfare. These behaviors are expressed both at home and in school, in different ways and means. Among the fathers who could not participate in school activities of their children, they reported that they would compensate for absence in school activities during weekends and after work. They would watch TV, play video games or engage in sports activities together with their children generally in their own homes. This is also true in the findings of Pleck (1997) on the levels and nature of involvement of fathers with the activities of their children.

However, based on the interview, it is truly the fathers with high participation who show greater concern for the future of their children. Beyond merely establishing close emotional bonds with their preschool children, they also try to socialize behaviors that would equip their children with traits necessary to cope in their later life. These fathers reportedly engage in doing school-related activities such as reading together and watching educational shows, as well teaching them household chores such as cleaning up and cooking. One parent stated,

“They should have a balance between playing and learning. I want my son and daughter to have good study habits. I want them to love learning as much as possible so that they won’t see it as a burden in the future. That way, I’ll be better assured that they will cope with the demands of school later on.” – **Bill**

Meanwhile another parent articulated,

“I do household chores with my daughters. I let them join me in washing clothes, cooking food, and cleaning up. Of course I’ll have to wash again whatever they have ‘washed’ already. But I want it to be fun for them. I don’t mind if they see the man of the house do these tasks because I want them to learn these habits of maintaining a clean household when they grow up.” – **Alvin**

These imply that it is not only in school that highly participative fathers would get themselves involved in when it comes to their children's affairs. They would also exert the extra mile of socializing in them good habits and other values such as being responsible – a trait that is characteristic of adults who are approaching generativity. This was emphasized in the some studies which reported that the characteristics of good fathers include being available to one's child, providing financial and emotional support; teaching, including lessons and values; and assuming responsibility for one's child (e.g., Sy & Schulenberg, 2005; Lemay, Cashman, Elfendein & Felice, 2010).

Conclusion

The results of the study suggest that there are indeed factors inherent within fathers, the mothers, and the children that affect paternal participation in school activities of their preschool children. In general, it was found that younger fathers employed by the university and whose wives or partners have the same profile are more present in school activities of their young children. This is attributed to the younger fathers' openness to the idea of shared parenting and that parenting is not just for mothers, which for a long time was the traditional perception of Filipinos (Mendez, Jocano, Rolda & Matela, 1984; Medina, 2001; Rodriguez, 2005).

Implications/Recommendations

The partnership between home and school is a very important aspect of early childhood education not just for the institution but primarily for the developing child and his or her family. It is for this reason that many early childhood centers invest a great deal of their resources on home-school partnership. Thus, based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that programs for young children consider having more family-oriented school activities. Such activities could be inviting parents, especially the fathers, when appropriate to the curriculum topic, as resource speakers to class activities. Centers should consider providing for child care when holding activities exclusively for parents, especially for families who do not have sitters. During the planning of annual school activities, the parents through

the Parent-Teacher Association could also be asked to propose events that would encourage family participation. This way, parents would feel more empowered as partners in facilitating their children's growth and development.

Since the research locale was a University Laboratory School of a higher institution for teacher-training, the findings could be used as a guide to guarantee that the future teachers would be equipped with knowledge and skills to deal with adults and to organize parent education programs.

In terms of methodological considerations, this research has a number of limitations which could also be addressed in the design of future researches related to this topic. First, it is recommended that future researches look into the relationship between the mother and father as husband and wife and as parents of the children. This is important because participation in school activities is one aspect of parenting practices, which is affected by how the mother and father perform their roles. It would be noteworthy to see if there is a correlation between the kind of relationship between mothers and fathers, and the performance of their duties towards their children. Moreover, since this study focused only on the perspective of the fathers, the result may be deemed biased for or against either parent, whereas if both parents are participants of the study, a more balanced view of parent involvement could be investigated. Instead of merely focusing on the demographic characteristics of the mother, the type and amount of support they provide in child care and in supporting their husband's parenting role should likewise be studied. As such, it is suggested that a separate interview be conducted with the mothers as well.

In order to broaden the scope of the study's generalizability, it is also recommended that the study be done to more numbers of preschool centers, with bigger enrollees, throughout several localities. This is to capture greater number of sampling across different socio-economic strata which could make the results be a better representation of Filipino parents' responses.

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¹ *Mabuting asal* may be translated as positive social behavior. These includes virtues such as respect and being polite as well as other prosocial behaviors of generosity, helpfulness.

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