

# The influence of parents' educational background on parent-child relationship

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**Abstract.** This paper illustrates the extent of how education background of parents could affect the relationship between children and parents. The inculcate in children is an essential factor that influences the relationship between children and parents. A strict education method may cause a harsh relationship between a child and his parents, while encouraging education is often beneficial for improving parent-child relationships. Children's education is decided by the education background of parents, as parents with different education backgrounds would educate child differently. Typically, parents who are well-educated perform better in educating children through a reasonable way. The data in this essay were collected through promoting questionnaires on social media, which uses parent-child sub-scale as the basic questionnaire. What's more, other evidence from previous researches were also used as a reference to guarantee authenticity. This study assumes that high educated parents can build a better parent-child relationship. Correlation analysis shows that significant positive correlation exists between fathers education background and positive father-child relationship, which is also the same for mothers education background and positive mother-child relationship. Furthermore, non-parametric tests also justifies that the education background of a mother shows a significant positive father-child relationship. These all demonstrates the fact that the more educated the parents are, the better parent-child relationship will be.

## 1 Introduction

With the continuous development of society, children's education has been widely concerned. In the process of children's education, family education has received more and more attention because of its importance. A growing number of researchers have begun to explore the effects of different educational backgrounds on child development. A study has shown that socioeconomic status, which is measured by parents' education, occupation and income, is a strong predictor of child development outcomes [1]. This is because different socioeconomic status predicts different academic resources for children. In China, a parent-child literacy activity was also carried out, and it was found that the higher the education level of parents and the higher the frequency of parent-child literacy activities, the higher the quality of the parent-child relationship perceived by children [2].

Some studies suggest that socioeconomic status indirectly affects children's education by influencing parents' expectations for their children. Previous studies have shown that compared with low-income families, middle and high-income families' expectations for their children are closer to their children's actual performance, and accurate expectations are more likely to enable children's achievements [3]. Goyette found that students whose parents went to college were more likely to do so because parents' educational experiences influenced their educational and career expectations for their children [4]. However, there is an increasing number of students who go to college, and an increasing number of parents expect their children to become a professional in a certain major or even get a higher degree.

### 1.1 Education background and parenting style

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There are some studies that show that different education levels make a difference in the way children are raised. Parenting style is closely related to children's educational outcomes, because parenting style can directly affect the formation of learning habits, and parents' requirements for their children are also reflected in parenting style [5]. In addition, they found that parents with a college education had different parenting styles than those with a high school education [6]. Children of parents with a secondary education consume less vegetables, fruit and milk, spend less time doing physical exercise and, conversely, watch more television. Therefore, the influence of parents with different educational backgrounds on children is different, so it is necessary to explore the influence of educational backgrounds on children's development.

### **1.2 Parent-Child relationship**

Parent-child relationship refers to the relationship between parents and children, including their ability to communicate and trust each other. A study has shown that a healthy parent-child relationship can increase children's trust in their parents, increase their communication opportunities, and better guide children's behavior [7]. Conversely, a child's perceived low level of parental care reduces the likelihood that children will communicate with their parents, which can lead to impaired behavioral and emotional health. McLaren and Sillars also show that emotional damage is inevitable in the parent-child relationship, and allowing it to continue will affect the subsequent parent-child relationship [8]. However, dealing with traumatic events properly can promote understanding and bring relationships closer. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the influence of parent-child relationship on children's development.

This study will explore the relationship between parental education level and parent-child relationship. The hypothesis of this study is that having highly educated parents leads to a more harmonious parent-child relationship. Parents' educational background and children's perception of parent-child relationship were

analyzed respectively to further understand the factors that parents' educational background mainly affects children's perception of parent-child relationship.

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Participant**

The respondents were 160 students. The researchers collected questionnaires by promoting them on social media. The age and gender of the participants were voluntarily disclosed and recorded.

### **2.2 Measurement**

Measure the educational background of the parents. The researchers included two questions in the questionnaire to examine the educational background of the respondents' parents. These two questions are "Your father's educational background" and "Your mother's educational background." Both of these questions provide seven options, which are "Primary school," "Middle school," "High school/Professional high school," "Junior college," "Bachelor," "Master," and "Doctor." These options are represented as 1-7 respectively when analyzing the questionnaire.

Taiwan Relationship Inventory for Children and Adolescents (TRICA). The TRICA was first designed by Chih-Hsun Wu, Yin-Chang Wu, Wen-Tau Hsu and Ren-Jau Shiau in 2008. In this questionnaire, there are three subscales: parent-child Subscale, Teacher-Student Subscale and peer Subscale [9]. Among them, this study mainly uses the parent-child Subscale, which is a four-level questionnaire used to measure parent-child relationship. It employs the Likert scale, with 1 indicating never, 2 indicating rarely, 3 indicating sometimes, and 4 indicating always. The questionnaire contains four factors, each of which has 6 questions to measure, namely, positive mother-child relationship, positive father-child relationship, negative mother-child relationship and negative father-child relationship. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.83 for positive mother-child correlation and 0.79 for negative mother-

child correlation. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for positive father-child relationship was 0.73 and it was 0.75 for negative father-child relationship.

**2.3 Procedure**

The whole process aims to investigate whether the educational background of the parents is related to the parent-child relationship. Before the study began, the scale was sorted out. The researchers used Sojump to issue questionnaires and let the participants complete the questionnaires. Sojump is a free online survey creator

that offers the equivalent of a Google form. Participants responded to the questionnaire using an electronic device to scan a QR code or link to the questionnaire web page.

**3 Result**

Data were analyzed by SPSS statistical software. The sample size was 160 people, including 67 male and 93 female. The age range was 16 to 18 years, with a mean of 17.681 and a standard deviation of 0.747.

**Table 1.** Frequency analysis of gender and age.

Items	Categories	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender	Female	93	58.13	58.13
	Male	67	41.88	100.00
Age	16	14	8.75	8.75
	17	36	22.50	31.25
	18	97	60.62	91.88
	19	13	8.13	100.00
Total		160	100.0	100.0

Table 1 is about the frequency analysis of gender and age of the respondents in this study. In terms of gender, the highest proportion of women was 58.13%. For the

male sample, the ratio was 41.88%. Among the sample, 60.63% were 18-year-olds, 22.5% were 17-year-olds, 8.75% were 16-year-olds and 8.13% were 19-year-olds.

**Table 2.** The relationship between parent’s educational background and parent-child relationship.

	Father educational background	Mother educational background	Negative father-child	Positive father-child	Negative mother-child	Positive mother-child
Father educational background	1					
Mother educational background	0.614**	1				

	Father educational background	Mother educational background	Negative father-child	Positive father-child	Negative mother-child	Positive mother-child
Negative father-child	-0.095	-0.104	1			
Positive father-child	0.159*	0.157*	-0.289**	1		
Negative mother-child	-0.149	-0.047	0.519**	-0.221**	1	
Positive mother-child	0.126	0.177*	-0.263**	0.480**	-0.515**	1

\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01

The association between the four items: negative father-child, positive father-child, negative mother-child and positive mother-child and the education background of parents was investigated using the correlation analysis (see Table 2). The strength of the association is indicated by the Spearman correlation coefficient.

According to the concrete analysis, the correlation coefficient between the father’s educational background and negative father-child is close to zero which is -0.095, and the P value is 0.234>0.05, indicating that there is no association between the two factors. The father’s educational background is positively and significantly associated with the with the positive parent-child relationship, according to the correlation value between father’s educational background and positive father-child relationships, which is 0.159 and significant at the 0.05 level.

There is no association between a father's educational level and a negative mother-child relationship, as seen by the correlation coefficient of -0.149, which is close to zero, and the P value of 0.060>0.05. There is no association between a father's educational background and a positive mother-child relationship, according to the

correlation coefficient value of 0.126, which is close to 0, and the P value of 0.111>0.05.

Additionally, there is a -0.047 correlation between the mother’s educational background and negative mother-child relationship which is close to 0. The P value is 0.556>0.05, which indicates that there is no association between the mother’s educational background and negative mother-child relationships. There is a significant positive association between the mother’s educational background and a kid who has a positive mother-child relationship, as indicated by the correlation coefficient between mother’s educational background and positive mother-child relationships, which is 0.177 and represents a significance level of 0.05.

There is no relevant between a mother’s educational background and a negative father-child relationship, as seen by the correlation coefficient value of -0.104, which is close to zero, and the P value if 0.189>0.05. There is a significant positive correlation between mother’s educational background and positive father-child as indicated by the correlation coefficient between mother’s educational background and positive father-child, which is 0.157 and indicates a significant level of 0.05.

**Table 3.** Nonparametric test of mother educational background and parent-child relationship variables

Mother educational background Median (P25, P75)	Kruskal -Wallis	p

	1.0 (n=7)	2.0 (n=14)	3.0 (n=23)	4.0 (n=34)	5.0 (n=58)	6.0 (n=16)	7.0 (n=8)	H	
Positive father-child	9.000 (9.0,10.0)	15.500 (12.8,18.0)	16.000 (9.0,21.0)	15.000 (13.8,18.0)	16.000 (13.0,19.0)	14.500 (11.3,18.8)	18.000 (15.5,18.0)	16.936	0.010**
Negative father-child	15.000 (10.0,20.0)	12.500 (9.8,16.3)	14.000 (11.0,19.0)	12.000 (9.8,17.0)	12.000 (9.0,16.0)	11.500 (9.3,17.0)	11.000 (8.5,17.3)	2.490	0.870
Positive mother-child	17.000 (6.0,23.0)	18.000 (13.8,19.3)	19.000 (15.0,23.0)	19.000 (14.0,22.0)	19.000 (16.0,22.0)	19.000 (15.3,23.0)	21.500 (20.3,23.5)	8.689	0.192
Negative mother-child	13.000 (12.0,21.0)	14.500 (12.0,18.0)	13.000 (8.0,15.0)	14.500 (10.0,17.0)	14.500 (11.0,18.3)	12.000 (10.0,17.0)	8.500 (6.3,14.5)	10.701	0.098

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Use a nonparametric test to study the difference of mother's educational background for four factors, which are positive and negative father-child and mother-child relationships. As can be seen from Table 3, the mother's educational background comprised more than two groups, so the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic was used for analysis. Samples with different mothers' educational backgrounds will not show significance ( $p > 0.05$ ) for the three items negative father-child, negative and positive mother-child, which means that samples with different mothers' educational backgrounds will not show significance on these three factors. Negative and positive mother-child all show consistency and no difference. In addition, the mother's educational background sample showed significance for positive father-child in one item ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that the educational background samples of different mothers have differences in positive father-child. Specific analysis shows that the mother's educational background shows significance at the 0.01 level for positive father-child ( $p = 0.010 < 0.01$ ), and the difference can be understood by comparing the medians.

#### 4 Discussion

In this study, the experimenters only explored whether there was a correlation between parental education and parent-child relationship, and found that there is a positive correlation between the father's level of education and positive father-child relationships, as well

as a positive correlation between the mother's level of education and positive mother-child relationships. The results of this analysis show that the higher the education of the father, the better the father-child relationship will be, and the higher the education of the mother, the better the mother-child relationship as well. In the results of correlation analysis, it is found that the mother's education level is positively correlated with the positive father-child. The non-parametric test also showed that the mother's educational background had a significant effect on the positive father-child. This shows that the higher the mother's education, the better it can promote a good father-child relationship.

A study pointed out that the higher the educational level of parents, the higher the educational expectations of parents for their children's academic performance, and that more educated parents are more inclined to use a variety of engagement strategies at home and at school to foster their children's academic performance [10]. In addition, according to Kaur and Kaur, children whose parents are highly educated have higher motivation to achieve, are able to develop good study habits and have lower self-esteem [11]. Therefore, it can be believed that parents with higher education know more about scientific parenting methods, teach their children according to their aptitude, and also create a more harmonious family atmosphere to make their children better.

The age range of the study subjects selected by the researchers was 16-19 years, which is because 16-19 years is the late adolescence. Late adolescence is an important stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood, and it is also a stage that lays the foundation for an individual's whole life [12]. The choices and challenges for people at this stage begin to diversify, therefore, many researchers are focusing on mental health development in this age group.

However, in this study, there are still limitations. Because the data collected on the educational attainment of parents were scattered, the study did not analyze parents of different educational backgrounds in groups. In future research, data on parents' educational background can be collected in groups to understand the impact of different combinations of parents' education levels on parent-child relationships. In addition, the correlation analysis only found a positive correlation between mother's education and positive father-child relationship, but no correlation between father's education and mother-child relationship. This may stem from the different roles parents play in the family. A study has pointed out that mothers' reactions are positively related to their children's school adaptability and negatively related to their children's aggressive behavior in school [13]. This indicates to some extent the importance of the mother, which may be related to the attachment of mother and the absence of father. Therefore, the specific reasons why a mother's educational level affects the father-child relationship need to be further explored in future research.

In view of the results of the study, it needs to be further explained that parents' educational background is not the only criterion to determine whether the parent-child relationship is harmonious. Whether teenagers can get a more suitable environment for healthy physical and mental development needs the joint efforts of parents, schools and even the community. Parents need to learn more scientific parenting styles, give more support and encouragement to children when they are doing well, and guide them to become better themselves when they are not doing well. At the same time, parents can learn

more about their children's life in school. Schools can organize more parent involvement activities, communicate regularly with parents about their children's progress and provide parents with more opportunities to understand their children's development. The community can also provide opportunities for parent-child activities so that more families can participate in them.

## 5 Conclusion

The study focused on parental educational background and parent-child relationships to see if having highly educated parents helped create parent-child relationships. The results further verified that the higher the education level of parents, the more positive the parent-child relationship. The results show that the mother's educational background contributes not only to the child's perceived mother-child relationship but also to the child's perceived father-child relationship. Therefore, the suggestion of this study is to make parents of different educational backgrounds attach importance to scientific parenting, pay attention to the healthy growth of children's physical and mental health, and establish a more harmonious parent-child relationship.

## Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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