

Literature Review

Parent Involvement and Child Behavior at School

Ellen Hsieh

My project is to build a model that can be used to predict whether the child tends to behave well or have behavioral problems at school. The goal of this predictive model is to help parents to better understand their child behavior at school, which can reduce certain bias belief in parents toward their child. In addition, the outcome of the prediction and the features considered in the model can also help parents to improve their parenting. The features of this model will be selected by reviewing related literatures.

Important features in child behavior and development

First, one important factor that may influence child development and behavior is parents' socioeconomic status. McLoyd (1998) contends that low socioeconomic status (SES) can negatively affect child socioemotional problems, and poor family income may influence child cognitive development and school achievement. Furthermore, social status is associated with child behavioral problems. With limited resources, the parents in disadvantaged families tend to be less capable of maintaining a good parenting style to reduce their child disruptive behavior (Leijten, Raaijmakers, de Castro & Matthys, 2013), given that they have same opportunity to attain a good parent training program as other parents in advantaged families.

One of the components in SES is education level. Parents education level is a critical attribute in child behavior because it influences not only directly but also indirectly on child performance at school (Davis-Kean, 2005). The indirect impact in the literature refers to the influence on belief and behavior of parents. For example, the expectation towards child from parents would be more appropriate. Having a more accurate knowledge regarding to their child performance at school, parents can have better idea how to adjust their involvement and create a better educational environment for their child, thereby improving child school performance (Alexander, Entwisle & Bedinger, 1994). Even though higher-educated parents are busier with their work and usually have longer work hours, they tend to spend more time with their children

(Sayer, Gauthier & Furstenberg, 2004; Guryan, Hurst & Kearney, 2008). This illustrates that high-educated parents value parenting time more and appreciate its value than low-educated parents. Based on high-educated parents' perspectives, it seems that quality time with child might also have positive effects on child.

Moreover, when we take a closer look to parents' characteristics according to their socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity often come to a play. For instance, in the U.S. African American is more likely to have a lower socioeconomic status (McLoyd, 1998). Apart from considering socioeconomic status and race, parents' marital status can also contribute to the outcome of child behavior at school. In prior studies, they identified that parents' divorce is strongly associated with children's behavioral problem, either for biological or adopted children (Peterson & Zill, 1986; Amato, 2000; Amato & Cheadle, 2008). Moreover, divorce as a life event might cause maternal depression which might lead to an increase in child behavior problems (Fergusson, Horwood, Gretton & Shannon, 1985).

Another feature that may be associated with child behavior is family structure. In two-parent biological families, parents tend to spend more time on monitoring their children than stepmother or stepfather families (Fisher, Leve, O'Leary & Leve, 2003), which is believed that authoritative parenting has a positive association with children's behavioral outcome. The gap is especially significant when it compares two-parent biological families and stepfather families. Another research also points out that stepparents put more emphasis on their own marriage other than parenting (Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey & Stewart, 2004). Moreover, a good parent-child relationship can lead to less disruptive behavior (Peterson & Zill, 1986). This parent-child relationship is also influenced by the family structure. Adoptive families struggle more about the relationship and tend to have a poorer relationship quality (Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey & Stewart, 2001).

Besides parents' characteristics family structure, the degree of parent involvement in child development and education can yield different child behavior outcomes. El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal (2010) find that high parent involvement can enhance child social skills and reduce behavioral problems. Parent involvement includes attending a teacher-parent meeting, volunteering at school, and attending school events. Through interacting with teachers, parents

can know better about their child performance at school. Furthermore, they can implement proper adjustment for their parenting style and help their child behave appropriately at school.

Teacher-parent communication can be one important factor when discussing parent involvement. However, an extremely high frequency of teacher-parent contact may lead to a worse child behavioral problems (Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow & Fendrich, 1999). This is because Izzo et al. indicate that the reason for teachers to contact parents frequently is mostly due to child behavior problems. Overall, Izzo et al. contend that parental involvement over time and teacher-parent collaboration can enhance child school performance and social functioning.

Moreover, the quality and composition of a neighborhood can have noticeable impact on child and adolescent development (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov & Sealand, 1993; Attar, Guerra & Tolan, 1994; Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Beyers, Bates, Pettit & Dodge, 2003). A poor and unsafe neighborhood can harm child well-being. On the contrary, living in an affluent neighborhood implies better living and learning environment, most of the times also including better schools. The choice of school can also contribute to child development and behavior. First, the quality of teacher and teacher-child interaction can affect child behavior outcome (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Furthermore, as the child grow up, the influence of the peer at school also becomes more significant (Gaviria & Raphael, 2001).

Child physical and mental health should also considered as important factors in child behavior and development. Currie & Stabile (2006) indicate that child with mental or physical health problems might impede child education attainment. Another study also shows that child with mental health problem or who is deaf express more anxiety and stress which may lead to behavioral problems (Van Eldik, Treffers, Veerman & Verhulst, 2004).

Conclusion

According to the literatures, the features that are selected in this model will be the variables related to parents' socioeconomic status, race, marital status, educational level, family structure, parental involvement, neighborhood, school, and child health condition. In addition, the features will also include child basic information such as race, grade, native language. The

independent variable for this model would be a score obtained by time contacted about good behavior and behavior problems.

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