

PARENTAL READING BEHAVIOR AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

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Keywords: reading, attitude, gender, persuasive communication; indirect, nonverbal

With international system-level assessments a great concern has emerged about decreasing reading appetite. Many adolescents dislike or avoid reading despite the fact that reading is a powerful tool for success not only in school but throughout adult life. Boys like reading less than girls, and their achievement falls behind (OECD, 2013). This phenomenon draws attention to the question of providing equal opportunities in education.

The aim of this study is to test whether parental reading behavior influences offsprings' reading readiness, habits and attitude and explains gender differences. We examine the possibility of involving parental reading behavior in Mathewson's reading attitude model. We hypothesize that parents' reading behavior has a significant impact on subteens' reading attitude, and, assuming that all components of attitude are represented in the model, we claim that parental reading behavior may be regarded as an indirect nonverbal exhibition of persuasive communication.

In Mathewson's Model of Attitude Influence Upon Reading and Learning to Read, variables moderating the relationship between attitude and behavior are represented in complexity. One of the direct influences on attitude is persuasive communication (Mathewson, 1985). Our focus is on this variable because we have found it to be the only one in which parental reading behavior may come to effect.

To collect data on parents' and students' reading behavior and students' attitude, paper-and-pencil questionnaires were used. Students' ones contained the attitude scale previously tested in a pilot study (Cronbach's $\alpha=.873$). The 3-point scale derived from ERAS (McKenna, 1990) and the Background Questionnaire of PISA (OECD, 2009) was designed to investigate the affective components of attitude in different reading situations. The cognitive and conative components were measured by yes/no questions partly adapted from PISA (OECD, 2009), partly developed based on focus group interviews.

The sample included 1,633 students (815 boys and 786 girls) in 4th, 5th and 6th grades in 10 primary schools in Hajdú-Bihar county, Hungary and their parents. The sampling strategy served the aim of representing the social diversity of the county.

A crosstab analysis showed a significant relationship between parents' and students' reading preferences (Chi-square=.012). Parental recommendation influences attitude in a positive way (ANOVA, $p<.001$). A significant impact of fathers' reading frequency has been found on students' attitude (Chi-square=.045). Mothers' and fathers' paper-based and online reading affects the two genders' attitude.

Although parental reading behavior as an explanatory power of gender differences has not yet been confirmed, its significant impact on reading attitude allows us to involve it in Mathewson's model as an alternative form of persuasion. It also means it deserves further research and greater interest among parents and teachers as its primary and secondary sources.