In recent decades Taiwan’s dynamic socioeconomic growth and political transformation have brought changes to a number of Chinese traditions giving rise to a more liberal middle class advocating for gender equality in Taiwanese society (Beckert, Strom, Strom, & Yang, 2006; Ho, Chen, & Kung, 2008). With an increasing number of dual-income and nuclear families, traditional parenting roles have also been challenged and Taiwan is shifting towards a more egalitarian view of parenting responsibilities (Ho, Chen, Tran, & Ko, 2010). A growing number of young couples are now choosing to live apart from grandparents; and with the changing support network, parenting responsibilities are becoming less gender-bound and fathers are becoming more involved in raising children (Ho, Ko, Tran, Phillips, & Chen, in press). Studies examining parenting roles and practices in Taiwan, however, are limited. This paper provides a review of father involvement in historical and contemporary contexts in Taiwan as well as government and corporate policies that promote father involvement. Using Attride-Stirling’s thematic network model (Attride-Stirling, 2001) the paper presents results of thematic content analyses of structured interviews conducted with fifteen Taiwanese fathers. The study addresses ways that fathers are involved in the lives of their young children (roles, activities, values, and beliefs). The fathers were selected to represent a range of ages (30-61 years) and educational levels (high school to Master’s degree). Results indicate that Taiwanese views about father involvement and engagement with children are slowly shifting from traditional beliefs associated with a patriarchal society toward more egalitarian beliefs with respect to gender roles and parenting responsibilities. The study contributes to scant literature on the changing roles of parents by including voices of fathers in contemporary Taiwanese households. The role of fathers in home-school-community partnerships in Taiwan is also discussed.

Keywords:
Father involvement, Parenting responsibilities, Gender roles, Taiwanese society, Generational changes, Qualitative research.

References:


