



PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND PARENTAL STRESS AS PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL READINESS

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Abstract: *The present study aims to investigate the parent – child relationship and parental stress as a predictor of school readiness. The sample consisted of 100 mothers (both working and non working) having minimum one child between age range 4-5 years, residing in Jaipur city. The standard psychological tests included Parental Stress Scale (Berry, J.O., & Jones, W.H.,1995), Positive Relationship with Parents Survey (Child Trends) and School Readiness Checklist. Results revealed a significant relationship between parent-child relationships and school readiness, and between parental stress and school readiness.*

Keywords: *Parent child relationship, stress, school readiness*

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School readiness is the child's level of preparedness to engage in and be successful in school. It involves child's physical, cognitive and social maturity. Various dimensions of school readiness are influenced by social, cultural, economic, policy and historic factors.

A strong body of research links maternal involvement to readiness. In general, positive parental interaction which includes positive affect and low levels of criticism are positively related to more readiness for school. All members in the family need permanent relationships on which they can depend for support and which are consistent and understanding. Such relationships provide a cushion on which children's school readiness depends (Berger, 2000).

Parental factors are the best predictors of children's academic achievement, which is supported by a study conducted by Burchinal, et al. (2002). They found that children who displayed better academic skills across time had parents with higher education and progressive parenting beliefs. Parental warmth and sensitivity support for child's emerging autonomy and parent's active participation in learning are the three most important dimensions which foster child development and hence his/her school readiness.

A study conducted by McWayne et al. (2012) showed that in the year before kindergarten, children whose parents participated in centre based activities were more school ready.

Factor such as parent involvement with literacy activities as well as affective quality of the home environment were associated positively with school readiness skills (Farver, et al., 2006). If parents engage their children in positive discussions about education, they can facilitate successful transition to school (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004).

Parental stress is another significant contributor of academic and school readiness. Stress makes it more difficult for parents to provide their children with sensitive and carefree environment (Ayoub et al., 2011). There can be various contributors which affect parental well being and stress levels such as their marital status, status of their employment and income.

Dotterer, Iruka & Pungello (2012) tested the link between parenting and financial stress and school readiness. Their research indicates positive child development is negatively related to parental factors such as parenting stress. Similarly Julie Ma & Sujong Park (2015) found out



that parenting stress was negatively related to Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) scores.

In the present study we investigated the relationship between PCR and school readiness and parental stress with school readiness. It was hypothesized that there will be a positive and significant relationship between PCR and school readiness and there will be a negative and significant relationship between parental stress and school readiness.

METHOD

Sample

The study was conducted on 100 nuclear families. The sample consisted of 100 mothers (both working and non working) having minimum one child between age range 4-5 yrs residing in Jaipur city.

Tools

Parental stress scale was developed by Berry, J.O & Jones, W.H (1995). The parental stress scale is a self-report scale that contains 18 items representing pleasure or positive themes of parenthood (emotional benefits, self-enrichment, personal development) and negative components (demands on resources, opportunity costs and restrictions).

Positive relationship with parents-parent survey consists of 8 items. It is a Self –Report Questionnaire. This survey has been tested with a nationally representative sample of parents. It has been found to have excellent reliability.

School readiness scale was developed by Sonja Walker (1998). It consists of 66 items representing social skill, fine motor & cognitive skill, independence skill, communication skill and gross motor & orientation skill.

RESULTS

The results were analyzed using correlation test

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of parent-child relationship, parental stress and school readiness

Serial No.	Variables	Mean (M)	Standard deviation(SD)
1.	PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP	25.32	4.55
2.	PARENTAL STRESS	40.01	10.5
3.	SCHOOL READINESS	159.03	21.68



Table 2: Correlation values for parent child relationship, parental stress and school readiness

	PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIP	PARENTAL STRESS
SCHOOL READINESS	.515**	.080

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

DISCUSSION

It can be recalled that the principle objective of the research was to find out the relationship between PCR and school readiness. Results suggest a highly significant positive relationship between the two.

In the child-parent relationship, parental expectations influence a child's ability to be successful in school. Maxwell and Eller (1994) reported in their research that parents who have high expectations from their children in terms of success in school and who provide a cognitively stimulating environment along with positive parent-child interactions have children who are more successful at school. A Head Start study indicated that when parents expect their children to do well, they will (Galper, Wigfield, & Seefeldt, 1997). They further indicated that when parents have positive belief in their children it correlated with their children's positive attitude toward school, performance on math and reading achievement testing, and the child's belief in him/her.

Researches have also revealed that parents constantly translate their expectations from children through both verbal and non verbal medium and this expectation from children more than anything else affect children and their adjustment in school.

Therefore it is beyond doubt that a healthy parent child relationship has significant impact on children's school readiness and adjustment and can lay a strong foundation for children and make them school ready.

Diamond et al. (2000) found that parents' school readiness beliefs included both behavior and academic skills. Many parental behaviours like discipline, language, management and materials are found to be correlated with children's academic school readiness (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 2007; Hess et al., 1984). Farver et al. found that this relationship was mediated by children's interest in literacy and thus found support for the bi-directionality of the parent-child relationship.

The second hypothesis under study was that there is a positive significant relationship between parental stress and school readiness. Results indicate a positive directional



relationship between school readiness and parental stress. However, it remains insignificant.

An intriguing body of research reveals that parent's stress can easily be seen being played out in children's behaviour. Parent's struggles, their daily difficulties and stress levels can have cascading effects on children

Parents relationship with their spouse, their children along with their internal stresses have multiplicative effect on children's ability to learn and read.

Certain parenting behaviors like warmth and acceptance from mother were found to be positively related to school readiness, while other behaviors were not related. On the other hand, shortness of temper and lack of patience were found to be negative correlated with school readiness (Hill, 2001).

According to McGroder (2000) if parents feel stress due to other environmental factors, that stress may spill over into the environmental level of parenting and their children may have lower readiness skills. McGroder found support for the ecological assumption that environmental levels can overlap and factors in one environment can affect individuals in other environments.

Although stress can affect the child's readiness to school and his/her behaviour, it is equally important to consider the time during which stress is measured to understand its true nature.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to bring into perspective the magnitude of impact parents have on their children's ability to learn and read. Therefore it may be recommended that parents engage in literary rich activities with their wards and incorporate activities that facilitate reading, singing and pre-literacy activities while promoting school readiness.

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