

The Extent and Influence of Paternal Involvement on Kindergarten Readiness

Karen Luz Y. Teves, Challen T. Dinglasa, and Aldwin M. Teves

Abstract— The study explored the extent and influence of paternal involvement on school readiness of kindergarten children in all elementary schools of Mabinay, Negros Oriental, Philippines. Self-made questionnaires were administered to 276 father respondents in 24 elementary schools and data was analyzed using Frequency Distribution, Pearson r and ANOVA. Findings revealed that School Readiness Assessment (SRA) scores of kinder children were fair or ★ in the four domains- gross motor, fine motor, receptive and cognitive. School readiness of kinder children was significantly influenced by paternal involvement activities such as talking, drawing, playing games and singing/ playing instruments with the child. Three life factors were found to be barriers to father-child relationship that significantly limit paternal involvement and lower SRA - father's relationship with the child's mother, father's financial standing and educational attainment. The study recommends that fathers should actively participate in their child's activities both in the home and school to improve the school readiness of their children. Fathers who are less educated should endeavor to further continue their studies to better relate with their child's achievement in school.

Keywords— Paternal, involvement, kindergarten, readiness.

I. INTRODUCTION

SCHOOL readiness is a multidimensional concept which is the result of children's direct and indirect interactions with environmental resources. It is also a product of social relationships among children, peers, families, and teachers that children come to acquire in the academic and social emotional competencies. School readiness is dependent not only on the qualities that children bring to the learning experience but also the context in which those experiences occur [1]. School readiness is defined in terms of children's assortment of skills once they enter school, such as their academic and cognitive proficiency, language and literacy capacity, and social-emotional functioning [2]. Fathers provide specific resources that when absent cause key components of children's development to be missed. Children from fatherless environments were less likely to be adequately prepared for school as children where fathers are actively involved in their

education [2]. Lack of school readiness among children was found to strongly predict employment difficulties, criminality, and psychological morbidity, as well as short-term academic problems [3]. As children's first and most important teachers, parents provide the early learning experiences that promote life skills, abilities, and attitudes that are the foundation to school success [4]. Societal change and development reveals that a great majority of women opted to be single parents because of personal reasons causing direct effect on their child's reading readiness. To most fathers who are married, they considered nurturing the small children a responsibility that belonged to their wives except if their wives are working and they remain in the house being jobless husbands. School age children involving fathers are better academic achievers and are more likely to get A's [5]. It was found out in a study that positive paternal engagement in the grade school predicts fewer problem behaviors in the secondary school [6]. Home-schooled children — whose families are closely involved in all areas of their education — are achieving high levels of success academically and socially [7]. This study was conducted to determine the extent and influence of paternal involvement on kindergarten readiness. The respondents were the fathers of kindergarten children in 24 elementary schools in Mabinay District I, Negros Oriental, Philippines. Specifically, the study determined the socio-demographic profile of father respondents, their extent of involvement on child's school readiness in SRA (School Readiness Assessment) domains - gross and fine motors, receptive/expressive language and cognitive. Moreover, various life factors that provide support to the father/child relationship were studied to find out which serve as barriers. SRA scores of the kinder children were used to determine if a significant relationship occur between the fathers' involvement in school and children's readiness.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study followed a descriptive research design. Using the Slovin's formula, from 24 elementary schools of the whole school district, 276 father respondents were determined. A self-made questionnaires were administered to the respondents and SRA scores of their 276 kinder children were obtained at each school Principal's record. Fathers were required to indicate their level of involvement by never, at least once a year, at least once a month, weekly and daily as to how frequent they engage in specific activities of their children. Frequency distribution and weighted mean was used to determine the extent of paternal involvement in the child's activities, in the determination of various life factors that

Karen Luz Y. Teves is an Assistant Professor, Graduate School, Central Philippines State University, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, Philippines (+63 09173080857, kartevs@yahoo.ca).

Challen T. Dinglasa is a Kindergarten Teacher in Mabinay, Negros Oriental, Philippines (+63 09269235960, chaigurl@yahoo.com)

Aldwin M. Teves is an Associate Professor, Graduate School, Central Philippines State University, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, Philippines (+63 09174474742; joiowen@yahoo.com)

support/serve as barriers to father-child relationship and in children's SRA. ANOVA was used to determine the significant relationship between the father's involvement in the school and children's reading readiness. For the weighted mean(WM), the following Range Intervals & Descriptive Equivalent (DE) were used: 1-1.75(child needs improvement),1.76-2.5(child displays fairness in the domain), 2.51-3.25(child is good in the domain) and 3.26-4(child is very good in the domain).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile

Socio-demographic profile of father respondents includes their age, marital status, educational attainment and number of children. For the kinder children respondents, only their gender was determined. Results show that most respondents (31.9%) belong to age 31-35(31.9%) and 36-40 years old (22.1%), few belonged to age 46-50 and 56-60 years old(1.1%). Majority were married (91.3%) while few fathers (3.6%) were single fathers and very few were single fathers who were living with the mother of their child (2.9%). Most of the father respondents finished elementary level only (33.3%), elementary graduate (22.8%), high school level (18.8%) and very few (0.7%) finished college. Majority of the fathers (65.2%) have 1-3 children, most have 4-6 children (27.9%) and very few (0.7%) have 10-12 children. Majority of the kindergarten children were males (50.4%) while only 49.6% were females. Male kinder boys outnumbered their girl counterparts.

B. School Readiness Assessment Score

Found in Table 1 are the General Weighted Mean of School Readiness Score per Domain. Domains being evaluated in kinder children includes the gross motor, fine motor, receptive/expressive motor, and cognitive motor with the following sub-domains: sensory discrimination and seriation/classification, concept formation, numeracy, reading readiness and construction and visual-motor integration of the kindergarten children.

There were five items to assess the gross motor in the child - running, jumping, hopping, skipping and throwing. Fine Motor were assessment of the kinder children while they were holding crayons/pencils, scribbling vertical and horizontal line, drawing human figure, drawing a house and coloring the line. Assessment of receptive/expressive motor domains of the kinder children includes how the answer question about oneself, using simple greetings and courteous expressions, following one-step direction and naming 4 to 6 colors. Cognitive motor assessment (Sensory Discrimination and Seriation/Classification) of the kinder children includes children discriminating texture, arranging objects, identifying same and different shapes, sorting objects based on two attributes and identifying the first and last in a row.

SRA-Cognitive Motor (Concept Formation) includes activities such as grouping and stating the common function of the house, showing/pointing left to right side of one's body, completing statement showing simple analogy, identifying

absurdities in a picture and conserving number. For the cognitive motor (Numeracy), children were assessed while they were pointing out which has more or less, counting up to ten objects, sequencing numerals 1 to 10, identifying the missing objects in a sequence and adding and subtracting combination of 10. SRA Cognitive Motor (Reading Readiness) of the kindergarten children. There were ten activities to assess this domain. This were as follows: identifying the missing part of the picture/objects, reciting or singing the alphabet, naming the upper and lower case letter, matching letter with its sound, reading 3-4 letter words, sequencing events in picture, identifying picture that were the same, identifying letter that were difference, identifying words that were the same and associating words with picture.

TABLE I
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN OF KINDER CHILDREN SRA SCORE PER DOMAIN

DOMAIN	SRA Gen. Weighted Mean (GWM)	Verbal Interpretation
Gross Motor	2.97	child is good in the domain
Fine Motor	2.61	child is good in the domain
Receptive / Expressive Motor	2.46	child displays fairness in the domain
Sensory Discrimination and Seriation	2.43	child displays fairness in the domain
Concept Formation	2.46	child displays fairness in the domain
Numeracy	2.46	child displays fairness in the domain
Reading Readiness	2.26	child displays fairness in the domain
Construction and Visual-Motor Integration	2.36	child displays fairness in the domain

Range Intervals & Descriptive Equivalent (DE) used: 1-1.75(child needs improvement),1.76-2.5(child displays fairness in the domain), 2.51-3.25(child is good in the domain) and 3.26-4(child is very good in the domain).

Results revealed that it is only in gross and fine motors that kinder children showed that they were doing good, with GWA of 2.97 and 2.61, respectively, while the rest of the domains showed that children displayed fairness in the domains with GWA of 1.76-2.5. Not a single kinder child needs improvement as shown by their SRA scores of the eight domains. It should be the goal of kinder teachers in Mabiny District to improve their pupils' SRA scores in the rest of the domains other than gross and fine motors. Although kindergarten teachers value academic skills and capability, they have also indicated that social and task-oriented skills are indicators of children's readiness for school, labeling these skills as indicators of how teachable a child is [8].

C. SRA Score as influenced by fathers' socio-demographic profile

There were four socio-demographic profiles of the respondents these were the age, marital status, educational attainment and number of a child. Of the four mentioned, the age, marital status and number of child did not affect the SRA score of the child (Table 2). Only the educational attainment of the father affected the SRA score of the child. This finding implies that education of the father is an important determinant to improve readiness of the child.

TABLE II
INFLUENCE OF FATHER'S SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE ON THE SRA SCORE

Socio-demographic profile	Mean SRA Score	
	F	Sig
Age	1.351	.227ns
Marital Status	2.604	.036ns
Educational Attainment	8.042	.000**
Number of Child	2.307	.077ns

** - highly significant, ns - Not significant at $P \leq 0.05$

D. SRA Score as Influenced by Paternal Participation

Table III revealed that there was a highly significant relationship between the paternal participation in reading, drawing, talking, playing games and singing or playing instruments with the child. But there was no significant relationship in constructing puzzles or shaping activities with the child. Thus, the fathers' doing puzzle activity with their child doesn't affect the SRA score of their child. But it is important that fathers read with their child, play, talk and sing with them to improve the school readiness of their child. As children's first and most important teachers, parents' provide the early learning experiences that promote life skills, abilities, and attitudes that are the foundation to school success. Positive reciprocal parent and child interactions facilitate cognitive development [9].

TABLE III
INFLUENCE OF FATHER'S PARTICIPATION IN CHILD'S ACTIVITIES ON THE SRA SCORE

Child's Activity	Mean SRA Score	
	F	Sig
1. Reading with your child.	9.347	.000**
2. Participate in drawing or other art activities with your child.	9.344	.000**
3. Construct puzzles or shaping activities with your child.	3.397	.010ns
4. Talking with your child about everyday routines or activities.	5.869	.000**
5. Play games or sports with your child.	5.314	.000**
6. Sing or play instruments with your child.	6.045	.000**

E. Various life factors that serve as a barrier to the father/child relationship

There were three barriers that affected the involvement of the father in school; the child's mother, father's level of education and his financial status. In the study, there were

fathers that remained single but continuously supported their child. Because of this set up, fathers found it difficult to see their child as often as they want because they are not living in with the child and the mother and because of this, there exist some strain in their relationship with the mother. To some, being financially unstable limits their intervention with the child due to work pressure to earn more.

IV. CONCLUSION

The more involved the fathers are in talking with their children, in drawing, playing games and in singing/playing instruments with them, the higher will be the children's SRA scores. High paternal involvement is contributed by the father's good relationship with the child's mother and his good financial standing. Thus, lack of good mother-father relationship may serve as barrier to paternal involvement. It is recommended that fathers and mothers should have good relationship with each other and frequently visit the school to check the development of their child. Fathers should actively participate in their child's activities in the home and school to improve the school readiness of their children. Fathers who are less educated should endeavor to further continue their studies to improve their financial status and better relate with their child's achievement in school.

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