RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE CHILDREN

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Abstract

Relationship between parent-child interaction and academic performance of the school children at primary level was investigated. The sample comprised of 100 students and 100 parents. Fifty students each from class four and five were selected from randomly chosen primary schools located in Rajshahi City, Bangladesh. The students showed to have been influenced by parent-child interaction, though the influence was not statistically significant. It was also found that parental educational background and the nature of occupation do not make any difference in the magnitude of parent-child interaction. The results did not support the view that significant relationship exist between parent-child interaction and children’s school performance.

Key words: parent-child interaction, school performance, parental involvement.

Introduction

Parent-child interaction has long been considered a crucial influence on a child's academic performance and development (Barnard and Kelly 1990). It is a form of communication between a parent and a child; the combined reciprocal action of a parent and a child that has an effect on each other (Russo and Owens 1982). Barnard and Kelly (1990) reported that child’s ability to experience, to decide, and to control his own behaviour through his decisions is dependent in many subtle and involuntary ways on his relationship and interaction with his parents. A variety of studies indicate that those parents who places a high value on autonomy and independence and on mastery, competence, and achievement generally to be democratic and encouraging of an active give and take interaction with their children; and to exhibit curiosity and a respect for knowledge have academically motivated, achieving children (Bailey et al. 1970).

Children’s higher school achievement rates, higher attendance rates, lower delinquency and dropout rates, and increased high school completion rates are enhanced by a strong parent-child relationship (Ziegler 1987). Stevenson and Baker (1987) reported that children performed better in school when teachers rated the parents as actively involved in school activities. Similarly, Gronlnick and Slowiaczek (1994) in their study found a strong association between teacher’s reports of parental involvement and teacher reported grades, controlling for parent’s education. Number of studies report that a warm and responsive parent-child interaction balances acceptance with limits, and is positively related to self-esteem, social acceptability, and achievement in young children (Elings 1988; Estrada et al. 1987; Bradley et al. 1988). However, when parents are actively involved in instruction through class visits or helping with class activities involving their children, their child’s behaviour and basic skill scores are higher (Maroon 1988). In a study, to investigate the relationship between parental child...
rearing practices and motivation to achieve in preschoolers, Nogy (1989) found that fathers who structured specific rules and regulations in their homes appeared to have preschool children who demonstrated greater achievement and motivation in school.

A number of studies on the relationship between parent-child interaction and children’s school performance have been conducted in abroad but no such studies have so far been conducted in Bangladesh. So, the present study was designed to investigate the relationship between parent-child interaction and the school performance of the children at primary level.

Materials and Methods

Sample: The sample of the study was comprised of 100 students and 100 parents . The students were selected from a randomly chosen government primary schools situated in Rajshahi city. Of the 100 students 50 were from class four and 50 from class five. The students were selected on the basis of their final examination results. Top 50 students according to merit from each class were chosen as respondents. The age range of the students was from 9 to 11 years. One hundred parents, particularly fathers of the respective students were also selected as part of the sample. But in some cases mothers were selected where fathers were absent. The age range of the parents was from 35 to 50 years. Parent’s educational levels were ranged from primary to post graduate degree and they were further categorized into three professions – service, business, and others.

Parent-Child Interaction Scale: This scale used was developed by Kale (1974). The scale consisted 28 items, of them 3 items - 1,15 and 22 were filler items and were not counted in the final scores. Subjects are to express their opinion on a 3-point scaling (from 0 to 2). The score range of the scale may vary from minimum 0 to maximum 50. High score indicates better parent-child interaction. The reliability coefficient of the scale as reported by the author was 0.98 and the item-criterion correlation ranges from 0.44 to 0.72 respectively. The time required to complete the test for parents ranges from 20 to 40 minutes, depending upon their literacy.

Results and Discussion

The results showed positive correlation between the student’s school performance and the parent-child interaction (0.18 and 0.13 for class four and five respectively), though the relationship was not statistically significant. The results also showed no difference between the parents regarding parent-child interaction in terms of their levels of education as well as occupation (Tables 1 and 2). So parental educational background and the nature of occupation do not make any difference in the magnitude of parent-child interaction.

Table 1. Difference in parent-child interaction in terms of educational levels of the parents of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sources of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>167.16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55.72</td>
<td>1.26&lt;sub&gt;ns&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>2031.32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2198.48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>195.67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65.22</td>
<td>0.78&lt;sub&gt;ns&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>3037.11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>83.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4032.78</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sub>ns – statistically not significant</sub>

Table 2. Difference in parent-child interaction in terms of occupation levels of the parents of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sources of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>62.16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31.08</td>
<td>0.49&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>2968.34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3030.50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>128.06</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64.03</td>
<td>1.74&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>1719.94</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1848.00</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>*</sup> – statistically significant

It was expected from the results of some previous studies, where strong association between parental involvement in educational activities and the school performance of the children was found (Stevenson and Baker 1987; Gronlich and Slowiaczek 1994; Douglas 2001), that parental involvement in children’s school activities will have a significant positive effect on the teacher rated grades and overall school performance and development of the children (Zeigler 1987; Barnard and Kelly1990). Researchers reported that parent-child interaction could arguably the most important factor in child’s academic achievement and
development (Bradley et al., 1988; Juel 1988; Elings 1988; Estrada et al. 1987; Holzwarth 2003). Douglas (2001) found high correlation between parental involvement and children's performance in school. Strong relationship between children's early knowledge of nursery rhymes and later development of phonological skill was also found by Maclean et al. (1987). Parent-child interaction with reading materials is important during the preschool period because it is during these years that children become familiar with story structures, complex syntax, and vocabulary. They will be better prepared to develop concepts that are prerequisites to reading and listening comprehension (Juel 1988). Holzwarth (2003) concluded that parent-child interaction could arguably the most important factor in child development, including academic achievement, behaviour and personality. Parents who provide an array of enriching cultural and social experiences during preschool and early elementary school have children who perform better on achievement tests and are rated as more task oriented by their teachers (Bradley et al. 1988; Bloom 1981). But the present study did not support the view of the earlier researchers, who advocated in favour of positive effects of parent-child interaction on the academic achievement and performance of the children in school.

The present study was conducted on a small sample taken from a primary school only. So, it is not possible to make any generalization from the obtained results. It may be concluded that further research can be conducted on a large sample, taking subjects from several schools located at different parts of the city. And the parents of the student-subjects should be selected controlling some important variables like parent’s education, socio-economic status and occupation, so that the effects of parent-child interaction can be studied more precisely.

References


