

Indigenous Conceptualization of School Readiness: Mother's Perspective in Pakistan

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Abstract : School readiness plays a significant role in helping a child deal with various school demands and expectations as well as in determining academic success outcomes. There is a scarcity of data concerning the condition of school readiness in Pakistan. This qualitative research seeks to examine the perspective of mothers about school readiness along with its four domains (self-care, socio-emotional, physical and cognitive) as well as about the appropriate age of entry into formal preschool. Fifteen interviews were conducted with mothers of pre-school children in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It was found that mothers shared the common perception that children should be socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively prepared to be ready for pre-school. The results concluded that the mothers unanimously agreed in their perceptions that three to four years was the appropriate age range for children to begin pre-school and that early or late entry into pre-school had negative implications for children's ability to learn and understand, and hence, their school readiness. Mental age was perceived as a more important criterion for deciding when to send children to pre-school. Mothers were found to send their children to school earlier, and children were found to be increasingly exposed to technology, both of which were found to influence children's readiness for school. Both schools and mothers were found to play an instrumental role in preparing children for school and in school adjustment by nurturing their skills and abilities.

Keywords : perception of mothers, Pakistan, school readiness, entry to preschool

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