

Research Paper

Admissions at tender age in pre-schools and impact on psychosocial and emotional-behavioral functioning

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ABSTRACT

Play schools prepare children for formal schooling. In present scenario more and more schools are admitting young children in play schools at a very tender age, say around two years. This is the age when the child needs to be close to mother for a healthy development. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between too early play school entrance and preparedness of children for school. The data was collected from different areas in Jaipur city. Sample of 120 children (2-3 years of age) was taken. Out of these, 60 children were those who entered the play school at the age of 2+ years and rest 60 at the age of 3+ years. The tool used for the study was Strength and Difficulties, which was designed by psychiatrist Robert N. Goodman. The questionnaire studies about 25 attributes, some of which are positive while rest are negative i.e. emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems, prosocial behavior. Another tool used was, Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS), that is a measure developed by Schaffer and colleagues to provide a global measure of level of psychosocial functioning in children. The measure provides a single global rating only, on scale of 0-100. The result shows that play schools prepare the children for formal schooling while sending to play school at a too early age has negative impact on the emotional- behavioral functioning of children.

Keywords: Admissions, tender age, pre-schools, psycho-social, emotional-behavioral functioning

A Preschool (also called Nursery school and Kindergarten) is an early childhood program in which children combine learning with play in a program run by professionally trained adults, is considered to be highly beneficial for children's development (Isaacs, J. B., 2008). Children are most commonly enrolled in preschool between the age of three and five. It has a positive impact on children's mathematical skills and literacy (McCoy, D., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. M., Duncan, G. J., Schindler, H. S., Magnuson, K., Yang, R., Koepp, A., & Shonkoff, J. P., 2017). Many a times, those as young as two can attend pre-school. Preschools are different from traditional day care in that their emphasis is learning and development rather than enabling parents to work or pursue other activities. They may be privately operated or government-run and the costs may be subsidized (Turner, Martin; Rack, John Paul 2004).

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The pre- school also has an impact on various domains of development. The question arises that when pre schooling affect all the developments, what impact does it have when children are separated for long hours from their family members and comfort zone.

Psychosocial development denotes the interrelationship between a person and his or her environment. Psychosocial is also a part of the interaction between social and psychological factors. Although, the child adapts to the school environment sooner or later, but does it not bring insecurity and initiate the fear of separation.

Emotional and behavioral health is an integral part of healthy development and enhances a child's sense of well-being, supports rewarding social relationships with family and peers, and facilitates achievement of full academic potential (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,1999). The new emotions that arise out of new situations bring in new behavior. Different responses are adopted out of these encounters. Are these the objective of the research was to find out the a) correlation between psycho-social functioning and emotional- behavioral functioning of children and b) difference between levels of psycho-social functioning and behavioral & emotional functioning of children.

Hypothesis

- Ho₁** There is no correlation between psycho-social functioning and behavioral - emotional functioning of children.
- Ho₂** There is no significant difference between psycho-social functioning of children taking admissions in schools at the age 2+ and at the age 3+ years.
- Ho₃** There is no significant gender difference between emotional- behavioral functioning of children.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample Size

The sample comprised of 120 preschoolers (2-3 years of age), out of which, 60 children were those who entered the school at the age of 2+ years and rest 60 entered the school at the age of 3+ years, collected by purposive sampling method.

Tool Description

The Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) is a measure developed by Schaffer and colleagues at the Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University to provide a global measure of level of psychosocial functioning in children. The measure provides a single global rating only, on scale of 0-100.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to identify behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents. It was developed by the child psychiatrist Robert N. Goodman. The questionnaire studies about 25 attributes, some of which are positive while rest are negative i.e. emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems, prosocial behavior. Each subscale consists of five items.

Statistical Analysis

The tabulated data was processed through various statistical techniques i.e. Mean, SD, t test and ANOVA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 Emotional-Behavioral and Psychosocial Functioning: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics (N =120).

		Psychosocial Functioning	Emotional-Behavioral Functioning
Psychosocial Functioning	Pearson Correlation	1	.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.093
	N	120	120
Emotional-Behavioral Functioning	Pearson Correlation	.154	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.093	
	N	120	120

* 0.05 level

As given in Table 1, the Children’s psychosocial functioning has no correlation with emotional-behavioral functioning ($r = .154$, $p = .093$). Hence the H_0 , “There is no correlation between psycho-social functioning and behavioral - emotional functioning of children” is accepted.

Table 2 Z-value of psychosocial Functioning of preschoolers with regard to their Age of admission

z- value	-0.6737
Two- tailed p-value	0.5005
Upper	5.7273
Lower	-11.7273

Table 2 suggests that z-values for means for the children who entered in the school at the age of 2+ years ($M = 73.2000$, $SD = 13.01212$) and the children who entered in school at the age of 3+ years ($M = 75.2500$, $SD = 12.84540$). The two samples are not significantly different ($z = -0.6737$, $p = 0.5005$, two-tailed), and the children of both the age have equal scores of Psycho-Social Functioning. Similar results are shown in the t statistics with the p value being .387.

The t statistics too suggest that children, who entered in the school at the age of 2+ years ($M = 73.2000$, $SD = 13.01212$) as compared to those children who entered in school at the age of 3+ years ($M = 75.2500$, $SD = 12.84540$), $t = .868$, $p = .910$ have no significant difference in the psycho-social functioning.

Table 3 Comparison of Psychosocial Functioning using ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	567.892	3	189.297	1.139	.336
Within Groups	19283.033	116	166.233		
Total	19850.925	119			

The one- way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference between the groups as determined ($F = 1.139$, $df = 3, 116$, $P = .336$). The Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test too revealed that the scores of Children’s Global Assessment for Psycho-Social functioning of groups were not significantly different, thus accepting the hypothesis no. 2, “There is no significant

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difference between psycho-social functioning of children taking admissions in schools at the age 2+ and at the age 3+ years”.

Table 4 Z-value of emotional- behavioral Functioning of preschoolers with regard to their Age of admission

z- value	-2.3013
Two- tailed p-value	0.0214
Upper	-0.1172
Lower	-1.4628

Table 4 suggests that the children who entered in the school at the age of 2+ years (M =4.7167 , SD = 1.79540) and those children who entered in school at the age of 3+ years (M = 5.5000, SD = 1.96149), t (-2.282) , p = .227, have significant difference in the emotional-behavioral scores. The scores of children who entered the school at 3+ years were better as compared to those children who entered the school at 2+ years. Similar results were shown in the t statistics with the t- value being -2.282 and the p- value being .024.

Table 5 Comparison of Emotional-Behavioral Functioning using ANOVA

Emotional-Behavioral Functioning	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.158	3	7.386	2.072	.108
Within Groups	413.433	116	3.564		
Total	435.592	119			

Table 5 revealed that there was a significant difference between group as determined by the one way ANOVA (F (3,116) =2.072, P=.108). The emotional- behavioral scores of children who entered school at the age of 3 years scored better. The boys who entered in the school at the age of 3+ years have highest mean behavioral and emotional functioning scores while boys who entered in the school at the age of 2+ years have lowest mean behavioral and emotional functioning scores. Hence, the Ho3 There is no significant gender difference between emotional- behavioral functioning of children”, is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The parents send young children to pre- schools due to many reasons. The reason may be their employment, desire to promote development or just following the trends. All children are different. Many get adjusted to separation and changed environment. But few have the problem in adjustment and they need more time to get ready to join formal education. Hence, individual differences should always be kept in mind. Nobody can bring back this cherished period of their life, when they can learn a lot in the care, love and affection of parents.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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