School Readiness During COVID19—

Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children

By:

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A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development
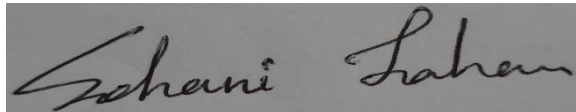Brac University
December, 2021

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Approval

The thesis titled "School Readiness During COVID19 —
Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children."

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: School Readiness During COVID19—Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children

Student name: Mst. Sohani Jahan Aurthy

1. Source of population: Homemaker mothers who have children age 3-5 years old

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no) No

   a) Physical risk to the subjects (No)
   b) Social risk (No)
   c) Psychological risk to subjects (No)
   d) discomfort to subjects (No)
   e) Invasion of privacy (No)

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no): (Yes)

   a) Nature and purpose of the study (Yes)
   b) Procedures to be followed (Yes)
   c) Physical risk (N/A)
   d) Sensitive questions (Yes)
   e) Benefits to be derived (Yes)
   f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (Yes)
   g) Confidential handling of data (Yes)
   h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (Yes)

4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no) (Yes)

   a) from study participants (Yes)
   b) from parents or guardian (Yes)
   c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (Yes)

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee: (Yes)

   a) Proposal (Yes)
   b) Consent Form (Yes)
   c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (Yes)

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:
(chair/co-chair/other)   _____

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Abstract

To control the spread of the Coronavirus, educational institutions were closed in the middle of March 2020 and thus the normal education process stopped, specially, child's school readiness process. This study aimed to understand parents' perceptions and practices about school readiness of 4-5 years old children in COVID 19 situation. This study is a qualitative study conducted on six pairs of parents (six mothers and six fathers) who wanted to admit their children in Bangla medium preprimary classes but were unable to provide that due school closure. The data has been collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. According to the study, most of the parents beyond questioning accepted the importance of School Readiness though majority of them do not have proper knowledge on this topic. Few of them revealed that school readiness is the preparation for the test that takes place during school admission. Most of the participants did not have idea about the age of preschool. The level of understanding of fathers was significantly higher than that of the mothers' but they were not as active in this process as the mothers. Parents had tried their level best to provide the maximum opportunities for their children during the pandemic. In general, they all were very worried about their children's future education and development. The study recommends that School Readiness should be included in the Disaster Management policy in order to reduce the loss and damage from any such emergency condition. To cover the gap created by COVID 19 we need to provide counseling support to the parents as well as for the children. Furthermore, for mass awareness, government may broadcast special programs on national TV, radio, newspaper and social media.

Keywords: School Readiness; COVID19; Perception; Practices; Parents; 4-5 years old children.

Dedication

To my parents, my husband and my son Ehan.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I want to show my thankfulness to Almighty Allah for showering His blessings on me throughout my Master's program, allowing me to successfully complete the degree.

I would like to express my gratitude to my research supervisor, **Syeda Fareha Shaheeda Islam**, Senior Lecturer, Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University, for her valuable assistance during this study. I owe her a debt of gratitude that I am certain I will never be able to repay because of her love. Her constantly helpful and encouraging ideas made this possible. Her words of support and appreciation have been the most beneficial to me in writing this paper. Working and studying under her direction was a huge honor and blessing.

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

COVID-19   Corona Virus Disease 2019

ECD   Early Childhood Development

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

IDI   In-depth Interview

KG   Kindergarten

SARS   Severe acute respiratory syndrome

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN   United Nation

WHO   World Health Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Introduction

The term "school readiness" refers to child's ability to make a natural and effective adjustment to formal education. Children must acquire social, psychological, and physical abilities while also developing a sense of curiosity and passion for learning. Children will have the best chance to acclimatize to a school setting and attain their learning ability if these foundations are ensured and links between families and schools are established (Keiki, 2021).

The word "school ready" refers to a child's ability to transition to school accurately and successfully. In relation to starting preschool, the term" preschool readiness" could be applied in the same way. (Kid Sense, 2020).

According to Maxwell & Clifford (2004), "School readiness is more than just about children. School readiness encompasses children, families, early settings, schools, and communities in its fullest sense. Children are not born with the ability to be "ready" or "not ready" for school. Before they start school, their abilities and development are heavily influenced by their family as well as their interactions with other people and environments." Parents are included as full partners in their children's development and learning through School Readiness.

Individual child readiness, school preparedness for children, and family and community preparation to support optimal early child development are all factors to consider in school readiness (High, 2008).

According to C. Everett Koop "When a child shows up for school, and is not physically and mentally ready to learn, he or she never catches up." (As cited in IPL, n.d)

The COVID-19 has expanded over the world, leading to the temporary closure of schools in the majority of countries (UNESCO,2020). In 188 countries, around 1.6 billion children and youth are out of school, accounting for nearly 91.3 percent of all registered students (UN,2020). This pandemic is harming young children's ability to study, play, and grow in a healthy manner. As a result of the epidemic, at least 40 million children have missed out on crucial pre-school education, as the COVID-19 has closed daycare services and early learning facilities around the world (UNICEF, 2020).

Pre-primary education in Bangladesh refers to the level of education for children under the age of six before they begin primary school. In certain schools, however, there is a different form of arrangement: play group for children aged 3-4, nursery for children aged 4-5, KG-1 for children aged 5-6, and KG-2 for children aged 6-7. (Banglapedia, 2021).

During COVID 19 all types of educational institutions are closed. Though a few online pre-primary activities in the urban area are open, however most of the pre-primary activities are closed. So, children's school readiness is greatly disturbed. In this situation, only the parents can be the key role player for their children's school readiness.

This study aimed to discover parents' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward school readiness as well as their experiences, challenges, and perceived needs related to their children school readiness during the COVID19.

Statement of the Problem

Children irrespective of community need high-quality, evidence-based early learning opportunities. A solid start is essential for a student's long-term success in school, higher education, the workforce, and life (Colorado, 2017).

Individual child readiness, school readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support optimal early childhood development are all factors that go into school readiness (Williams, 2019).

To deal with COVID19, most governments choose to lockdown system. Furthermore, nearly all businesses were forced to shut down. Not only have people's lives been drastically altered, but entire industries in countries have also been substantially transformed (Gumber & Bulsari, 2020).

COVID-19's global explosion has dramatically altered nearly every element of life, including education, and Bangladesh is no different. To control the spread of the Coronavirus, government announced school closures in the middle of March 2020. This is the longest school closure in history (UN, 2020). The main domain of school readiness process is children, who are crucially dilapidated in this critical situation.

Lockdown, shutdown, social restriction and control change the socio-economic living standard. It causes massive problems and people's lifestyles have been severely disrupted. In this situation parents could not properly participate in "School Readiness" process.

School and community were ineffective during Corona period and thus kids were unable to attend preschool or other communities, visit relatives, or go outside and play with close friends. Their activities become limited and study time has been reduced. Children only got support from family at this time. But during the Corona period, the mental state of everyone around the world has deteriorated. Most families have faced economic problems. The interaction between parents and children might have become different, which impacted their children's school readiness. So, parents might not have been able to take proper care of their children. This lacking has a huge impact on children's school readiness.

From the moment a child is born, parents are known to be a child's first teacher, and as they grow into adults, parents' traditional roles include educating, leading, and nurturing child to become strong member of their communities. When their children begin formal schooling, most parents allow the school to assume responsibility for a large portion of their official education. When it comes to formal education, parents are more of the providers. Unless parents have accepted full responsibility for homeschooling their children, ensuring that children have the necessary resources and assistance to access education and learning (Ceka & Murati 2016; Emerson et al., 2012).

In such a pandemic situation, parents have to be more active for developing their children's skills. In case of vocabulary development, they might be gaged in oral communication. For instance, asking questions, affirming and expanding their responses and encouraging them to listen and notice how words relate. Besides, parents need to use different techniques to develop their curiosity, creativity, independence, ability to cooperate and persistence which increase their general knowledge and make them effective learners. Moreover, to ensure social and emotional development, parents need to provide opportunities to play with peers and relatives at the same time they have to maintain social distancing and other safety measures. In this circumstance, this study will explore the scenario of the parents' perception and practices towards school readiness of their children in a critical situation such as COVID 19.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the parents' understandings and practices about school readiness of 4-5 years old children in COVID 19 situation. The key objects of the study were:

1. To explore how parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation
2. To know about the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situation

This study will give an insight into the parents' understandings about school readiness and will provide recommendations on process which may apply in the special cases like COVID 19 situation.

Significance of the Study

During the ages of birth to five years, the human brain develops at a faster rate than at any other time. Children begin to develop early literacy skills in the first five years of life. We all know that a child's odds of excelling in first grade are based on how much they knew about reading and writing before attending school (FTF, 2021).

The skills and attitudes that they develop during this period will aid their future success. Children have opportunity to improve their oral language skills, obtain a better comprehension of written language, exercise their growing literacy skills, and enhance their cognitive and social talents as a result of their daily experiences. Children learn these skills at home (Purcell & Gates, 1996). Schools are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of all children at all stages of development (Williams, 2019).

It is mentioned earlier that the pre-primary schools in Bangladesh were closed during COVID 19 pandemic and thus the entire school readiness procedure has been ruined. School and the community, the most important part of preschool program is unable to take part on their respective roles, this is why parents had to be solely responsible in this process. However, parents may provide essential supports in school readiness program, though the level of progress depends on educational background, parenting skills or social and economic class of parents.

Due to socio-economic unrest and tension normal family life became stand still. As a result, the parents may not be able to provide quality time, proper support and attention

which are required for proper pre-schooling. Since, school readiness is very essential for the children, parents' need to have adequate knowledge about this.

This study is on an ongoing issue that is taking place all around the world. There are several researches on parents' perceptions, practices, and beliefs on school readiness in various contexts around the world. However, there are few studies in Bangladesh which provide evidence on parents' perceptions on their children's school readiness at home. A few parents are engaged in preschool related activities and their knowledge on pre-schooling is insufficient. If we do not even know what parents are thinking, we might not be able to figure out where the knowledge gap is.

Therefore, it would not be possible to build an effective intervention or advocacy. This research could pave the way for further researches about parent's knowledge gap in this area. In addition, this study will serve as a resource for ECD specialists.

This type of crisis has happened previously, such as SARS in 2004, and may happen in the future; consequently, we explore this issue and identify what happened in a family during this crisis to provide a reference for advocacy and future study and practice.

This study will be focused on parents' perception and practices of school readiness during COVID-19. In addition, this research may provide some insight into how to improve our lives in the future if we encounter a similar situation. More importantly, Government Police Makers will be more thoughtful in developing polices to deal with emergency situation.

Research Topic and Research Questions

Topic: School Readiness During COVID19—Perception and practices of parents having 4-5 years old children

The goal of the study was to learn more about parents' attitudes and practices about their children's school readiness at the age of 4-5 years old in COVID-19 situation.

Research Objectives

- To explore how parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation.
- To know about the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situations.

Research Questions

Research questions were as follows-

1.   How do parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation?

2.   What are the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situation?

Operational Definition

Parents: Parents of 4-5 years old children, those who wanted to admit their children in Bangla medium preprimary classes but were unable to provide that due to COVID 19.

Perception: Parents' perceptions refer to their feelings about their children's readiness for school. Both the fathers' and mothers' perspectives will be taken into account in this study.

Child: 4-5 years old preschoolers, who missed their preprimary school facilities of Bangla Medium during COVID 19 situation.

COVID 19 situation: COVID-19 is a new Coronavirus strain that causes illness. The letters 'CO,' 'VI,' and 'D' stand for corona, virus, and disease, respectively. The disease was previously known as the '2019 new corona virus.' (WHO, 2020).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains an overview of school readiness and parents' perceptions of school readiness, as well as a review of related studies. Following a review of the literature, it has been divided into separate themes, which are described below:

School readiness

School Readiness refers to a child's readiness to start school as well as the condition in which a kid is prepared for learning experiences at school. School readiness may relate to the maturing of a child's nervous system, allowing them to learn a variety of skills in response to stimulation (Janus, et.al, 2007).

Concept of 'School readiness' has been organized into five main domains: Language and literacy development, Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), Approaches toward learning, Physical well-being and motor development, Social and emotional development (Mead,2021).

Each of these domains is an important component of a child's total school readiness, which is influenced by a variety of circumstances.

According to studies, social and emotional abilities at the beginning of school are connected to later academic success (Collie et al. 2018; Guhn et al. 2016), as well as achievement in education, employment, and public health outcomes in adulthood are also important life outcomes (Jones et al. 2015).

According to Willer & Bredekamp (1990), there are several common misconceptions about school readiness that serve primarily to keep children out of school rather than ensuring that they are ready and capable when they enter kindergarten. Common misconceptions are:

(1) School is the only place where children can learn

(2) Readiness is a specific condition within each child

(3) Readiness can be easily measured

(4) Readiness varies with age, and some children require additional maturation

(5) Children are ready to learn when they can sit quietly at a desk and listen

(6) Children who are not ready do not belong in schools

(as cited in Mehnaz, 2013, p.17).

Brooks-Gunn and Markman (2005) did a study of the literature to learn more about ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. They discovered evidence in the literature showing children from high-income families had greater vocabularies and engage in significantly more discussions than children from others families. And, because these discrepancies tend to accelerate during early childhood development, a large gap emerges by the time children start school, leaving economically disadvantaged children behind in class. Many aspects in a child's environment, such as ethnicity and social status, have a part in their school readiness.

Parents' role in children's school readiness

Several studies have found a correlation between parents' school readiness perceptions and their children's kindergarten academic achievement (Froiland, 2020). According to Landry & Smith (2008), parents' personal qualities, such as their perceptions of their children's developmental and school readiness needs, are frequently linked to parental behaviors.

A primary impact on children's literacy habits is thought to be parental engagement (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). A child's ability to learn is not inherited; it is developed through practice and learning. In this respect, parents can help their children develop their learning abilities. For example, reading, writing, and other skills.

According to research, children who grow up with their parents at home and whose parents participate in their literacy activities as a model for their education are better prepared for school (McNaught, 2007).

This is because school readiness involves not only the personal preparation of the child, but also the preparation of the school for the children, as well as the ability of the family and community to provide the necessary opportunities and support for the development and learning of the child. (Dockett, Perry & Kearney, 2010).

Early language and literacy have long been regarded as a critical component of school readiness (Riley & Reedy, 2007). There are a variety of activities that parents may do with their young children to help them improve literacy skills and prepare for school. Reading with children, teaching those songs and nursery rhymes, playing with letters and numbers, bringing children on field trips, and providing regular opportunity for them to play with their friends and other children are all examples of these activities.

School readiness of children in COVID-19 situation

COVID-19 impacted every system of life. It has been found and reported from all around the world since December 2019. The COVID-19 epidemic has had a terrible impact on

human life all around the world, posing and unprecedented challenge to public health officials.

Public health, the economy, livelihood, social life, and other areas are all affected. According to World Health Organization (2020), due to COVID 19, 5 crore people was infected and about 10 lacs were dead. WHO (2020) also reported that, COVID-19 will be the cause of severe poverty of more than 1 crore people. To stop the virus from spreading and putting a strain on health systems, countries all over the world have made unprecedented efforts to adopt the practice of "social distance", which has resulted in the closure of numerous schools (Dalton, et al., 2020). School closures have wreaked havoc on the lives of billions of kids and teens all over the world. (Sheen, et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, government took few majors in order to find out the educational crisis that has arisen as a result of the pandemic. In addition, the number of students admitted in preprimary school is much lower (almost half) in comparison to elementary and secondary schools. (UNESCO, 2020). It clearly shown that, there is a disaster in preprimary education system.

The private school system in Pakistan has chosen to assign homework to students in order for them to follow the year's curriculum; nevertheless, when the situation became unpredictable, they declared summer holidays (Hasan, 2020).

According to the UN's COVID Policy Report (2020), children have the highest risk of affecting in any unfavorable condition. In such COVID crisis, children lost their opportunity to play, early learning and other recreational activities. All of these disrupted the normal school readiness of children.

According to Rawstrone (2020), a survey on parents with primary-aged children, 60% are concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their children's, with 87% reporting that their children were missing school and less than half reporting that their children were lonely, all of which has an impact on their children's mental health and wellbeing. (as cited in Zhen, 2020, p. 9).

A study investigated the effects of COVID-19-related social distancing practices on parents and children's mental health and explored joint parent-child activities and coping strategies among Arab families in Qatar. The sample of 308 parents answered self-reported questionnaires regarding their mental health, coping strategies, activities with their children, social distancing practices, and their children's mental health. The results showed a significant positive correlation between social distancing and parents' activities with their children and their coping strategies, as well as between parents' mental health, activities with their children, children's mental health, and parents' coping strategies. (Abdelrahman, Al-Adwan & Hasan, 2021)

In the pandemic, many parents have difficulties coping with their children. Both children and adults feel isolated, children not being permitted to go outdoors and play with their friends for fear of getting an infection. As a result, they are not capable to get ready for school. (Wang et al., 2020a, b).

As Brooks et al., (2020) asserts, "Families must share a limited amount of space within the house during the present pandemic and make use of whatever resources available to adapt their routine and deal with new challenges." In addition, Fegert & Kölch (2017) reveled that, parents are concerned about job securities, economic burdens, loss of

physical and social interaction with extended family, and their responsibility toward their children in helping them express their feelings, thoughts, and fears. In these circumstances, according to Fegert et al., (2020), "parents are responsible for engaging in activities that improve and support their own and their children's mental health." (as cited in Abdelrahman et al., 2021)

Research on 1800 Chinese children was conducted to determine the influence of home quarantine on children's mental health. It was discovered that one in every five children (20%) in China suffers from depression, anxiety, or both (Dunleavy, 2020).

Mental health difficulties with children in the United States have remained quite high during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4.4 million children aged 3 to 17 have been diagnosed with anxiety and 1.9 million with depression as a result of the COVID-19 home quarantine. Furthermore, almost three out of every four children suffer from both sadness and anxiety (Galvin, 2020).

Some Chinese researches indicate ways to help those afflicted by the pandemic, particularly children, with their mental health (Zu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Nearly 38 million Bangladeshi students have been deprived of the opportunity to acquire adequate education and communicate with their peers since schools closed in March 2020, negatively impacting their educational experience (World Bank, 2021).

According to field research performed in Bangladesh by 15 international and local organizations that since their regular childhood is absent during the present epidemic,

children are enduring emotional and psychological distress. According to the report, 55 percent of students were dissatisfied with their situation of staying at home, while another study indicated that 87 percent of students' lives have become more difficult as a result of the pandemic's long-term school closures. Furthermore, 52% were concerned about the repercussions of the epidemic (Sakib, 2021).

Above studies and reports show that closure of school (ready school) social distancing (ready community), unsound family condition (ready family) which result to the failure of school readiness practices.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study is briefly described in this chapter. The multistage research methodology approach begins with the study's design and method, the research site, the research sample, the sample characteristics, and the instruments utilized, and then moves on to a brief explanation of data collecting, the data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations.

Research Approach

A qualitative method was used to learn about parents' opinions and practices of their 4-5 years old children's school readiness in the COVID-19 circumstance. The qualitative method permits a more in-depth evaluation of how people learn to perceive, behave, and manage their daily lives in specific settings or contexts (Aspers, P., Corte, U, 2019). This helps people understand why they think, feel, react, and behave the way they do. In this COVID 19 setting, the researcher will focus on parents' perceptions and practices of their children's school preparation, how they deal with problems, and how they encourage their children to practice school readiness. As this research is a descriptive study, and this investigation of knowledge and practice is a descriptive study, a qualitative technique was the best option.

Research Participants

The study population in this research was the parents having 4-5 years old children, those who wanted to admit their children in Bangla medium preprimary classes but were unable to provide their children preschool facility due to COVID 19 situation. The sample size of this study was six pair of parents (six mothers and six fathers) with at least one child aged between 4-5 years who were missed their preprimary education facilities duo to COVID 19 pandemic. The age range of the parents was between 29-45 years. The educational qualification of the parents was graduation and post-graduation. There were both working and non-working parents present.

Research Site

The research was carried out in Dhaka. The participants all came from the Vatara area. In this research, data were obtained from the urban Dhaka area, which represented the urban area of Bangladesh.

Sampling Procedure

The 'purposive sampling' technique was used to obtain participants for this study. Purposive sampling is a qualitative research method that requires identifying and selecting individuals or groups of people who are exceptionally knowledgeable about the phenomena of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The study's purpose is very specific, so there were some specific criteria to guide sample selection: parents must have children aged 4-5 years old, and the children must have missed their preschool facility due to the COVID-19 epidemic The study's objective was to find out what parents thought and did about their children's school readiness while they were 4-5 years old and living in a COVID-19 circumstance.

Data Collection Methods

To achieve the research's objectives, two separate data collection tools were used, In-depth-interview (IDI) and Focus groups discussion (FGD). Guidelines were prepared and evaluated by experts collecting data for the Group Discussion and In-depth Interview (IDI). Pilot interview was conducted in order to assess the procedure's validity and identify any gaps.

Participants were asked for permission to participate in the study. The researcher explained the study's purpose to the participant. The entire interview session was recorded with the approval of the participants.

The Researcher conducted one focus group discussion with six parents, which lasted about 70 minutes. Similarly, the researcher conducted a 40-50 minutes in-depth interview with each of six parents.

Since the objective of this study was to understand about parents' perceptions and practices of school readiness in children aged 4-5 years in a COVID-19 situation, the researcher created an in-depth interview questionnaire and a Focus Group Discussion guideline in easy-to-understand Language. The IDI and focus group discussions began with some informal questions to let participants feel at ease so they could openly share their experiences. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather information about participants' ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, such as their educational backgrounds and professions. The information was recorded on an audio recorder, and the most essential aspects were painstakingly written down. Finally, the participants were thanked for their time, comments, and cooperation in a wrap-up session.

Data Analysis

The Researcher recorded and transcribed the collected data for both In-depth Interviews and Group Discussions. During the interview, the responses of the participants were recorded. Following the interview, the researcher wrote a transcript of the conversation. The Researcher collated all of the data, including recordings and transcripts, whenever all

of the transcripts were completed. To organize data from in-depth interviews and Focus Group discussion, all of the data was sequenced and grouped in two different computer folders after it was collected. The possible themes of the findings were identified as a result of the description. The data was then categorized and coded. And similarities in the category were studied to determine the study's themes and topics. Finally, under each theme, the study's findings were presented in a descriptive way.

Validity & Reliability

The researcher conducted the research with extreme caution. Validity is an issue in qualitative research to defend the study's correctness and reliability, so multiple ways will be utilized to ensure the study's validity. With the mentor, a debriefing will take place as well. Descriptive data will be collected in great detail to ensure transferability. Based on the study questions and questionnaires for an In-depth Interview, appropriate procedures and approaches will be maintained. To confirm the validity of the research tools, they were examined by a supervisor and a panel of academic specialists. After receiving feedback from the supervisor and the expert, the questionnaire was amended and edited.

A pilot interview was conducted with the questionnaire that had been reviewed, and there were no gaps in the procedure. The participants were able to answer all of the questions during the piloting. As a result, the tools' validity, consistency, and understandability were ensured by the pilot interview. The researcher utilized both FGD and IDI to triangulate, and she asked the same question to the participants in different ways. This method was used to determine the triangulation in this study.

Ethical Issues

In this research, the ethical principles were strictly followed. Initially, the research proposal was submitted to the BRAC IED, BRAC University ethical review committee for ethical approval. Each participant received the necessary information and explanations about the IDI and FGD procedure before the study began, allowing them to form an opinion about whether or not to participate. The verbal consents of the respondents were obtained, and their voluntary involvement was assured. They were told that they might leave the research at any time with no consequences. The participants were assured of their privacy and security, that their identities would not be revealed, and that the data they submitted would only be utilized for this study. Participants' fictitious names were used to represent each data set instead of their real names.

Aside from that, participants were guaranteed that the information they provided would be cited accurately and without any modification or alteration. During the research, the Researcher's major responsibility was to keep participants secure from mental distress. The researcher did not construct any questionnaires that could be damaging to the participant's mental health.

The data had to be carefully collected and transcribed, and the report had to be free of researcher biases. The research paper had to be free of plagiarism and provide sources for the information gathered.

Limitations of the Study

Participants were chosen only from urban area of Dhaka city. Due to time constraints, it could not possible to gather a large number of samples. All participants will be from similar socioeconomic background and nearly common mentalities. Moreover, there will be limited movement because of COVID 19 pandemic. The researcher did not get enough literature on parents' perception of school readiness from the context of developing countries like Bangladesh.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the findings and discussions derived from the data acquired from In-Depth-Interviews and Focus Group Discussions on parents' perspectives and practices surrounding school readiness for their 4-5 years old children. At the beginning of this chapter, the demographic profiles of the participants are shown.

Results

The main objective of this study was to learn about parents' perceptions and practices about school readiness of 4-5-year-old children in the COVID 19 situation. The results and outcomes from the primary data are presented in this chapter. The results were derived through thematic approaches that were identified and analyzed in several themes

and sub-themes. There are four main themes and various sub-themes, all of which are organized around the study's research questions. The results were generated through thematic approaches that identified and analyzed several themes and sub-themes. First, data on parents' understanding of their children's school readiness was gathered. Next, the results were gathered on parent's perception about school readiness during COVID 19. Following that, the data on their practices and the challenges that parents face as a result of the pandemic situation was compiled. Finally, parents expressed their concerns, followed by some recommendations for improving children's school readiness in the pandemic situation.

Demographic Information

Six pairs of parents with children aged 4-5 were interviewed. The parents were within 29 to 45 years aged. Among whom three pairs of parents have two children, while the remaining respondents only have one child. The parent's educational qualifications included graduation and post-graduation. All of the participated mothers except one, in this study were homemaker. On the other hand, fathers were service holder in different job sectors. The children were between 4 to 5.11 years old. There are three male children and same number of female children.

	General information (in-depth Interview)							
Sl.	Date of IDI	Name of participants	Age	Educational qualification	Occupation	No. of children	Gender (children)	Age (children)
1	21/10/21	Shayla	35	MSc	Homemaker	02	Male	5.5
2	21/10/21	Farhad	45	MSc	Private Service	02	Female	5.5
3	22/10/21	Nazma	34	Honors	Homemaker	01	Female	4.5
4	22/10/21	Poly	37	MSc	Teacher	02	Female	5
5	29/10/21	Yosuf	40	MSc	Private Service	01	Male	4.5
6	29/10/21	Faysal	38	MBA	Business	01	Male	4

	General Information (Focus group Discussion)							
	Starting Time; 6.30 p.m.				**Ending Time: 8.25 p.m.**			
Sl	Date	Name of participants	Age	Educational qualification	Occupation	No. of children	Gender (children)	Age (children)
1	12/11/21	Hashib	40	Msc	Private Service	02	Male	5.5
2	12/11/21	Mili	36	BSc	Homemaker	02	Female	5.5
3	12/11/21	Mahmud	38	MBBS	Doctor	01	Female	4.5
4	12/11/21	Mojubil Islam	43	MBA		02	Female	5
5	12/11/21	Ruma	35	MSc	Homemaker	01	Male	4.5
6	12/11/21	Sadiya	32	Msc	Homemaker	01	Male	4

Theme 1: Parents understanding about school readiness

The results presented under the theme describe parents' understanding of their children's school readiness as well as the importance of it in their eyes.

Knowledge about the term School Readiness

Almost every participant was familiar with the term "School Readiness". Most of the parents revealed that school readiness is basic preparedness of children before going to school. Among them, mother Z said,

> *"Since I had been working in a preschool for some time, in my opinion, school readiness is basically everything that is taught in preschool, such as recognizing letters, teaching short rhymes, teaching good and bad, toilet training, understanding others, understanding and answering, presenting oneself."* (IDI#3, 22/10/2021)

Whereas, on the other hand, one of the participants stated-

> *"All children are required to take a small test at the time of admission to school. Knowing the pattern of questions in that test, taking advice from other experienced parents, and accordingly preparing the child for primary education is called school readiness."* (IDI#4, 22/10/2021)

When asked about preschool age, most parents answered almost immediately. Others did not have such a clear idea.

This finding indicates that only one participant lacked this understanding of school readiness, as she was unable to respond to the question accordingly.

Understanding of the importance of School Readiness

All of the respondents recognized the importance of school readiness. According to them, children should have basic knowledge before enrolling in school. By basic knowledge they referred to the same things such as holding a pen, recognizing the alphabet, numbers, primary colors and ability to make basic communication with others, etc. When asked about the importance of school readiness one of them commented -

> *"Children should be given a basic idea of education after the age of three. Since this is the age of competition, in order to get admission in a good school, the child has to be qualified accordingly. If it is not possible to provide at least the basic knowledge, he will not be able to survive in school. The child's mind will always be shallow."* (IDI#5, 29/10/2021)

One of the participants expressed that child are like clay, they will grow up the way we make them. School readiness is the foundation in this case. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Another participant mentioned that, if the child does not have school readiness within 3 to 5 years, then the child does not get a chance to learn later. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Opinion about parents' involvement in children's School Readiness

All of the participants shared their opinion about parents' involvement in children's School Readiness. Most of the participants confirmed that parent's involvement in school Readiness is important. Parents play a major role. They build bridges between school and the child. Some participants said that parents should have to teach their children through

playing; they should not be irritated in this respect. Others said that parents can teach in a way that no one else can. (FGD#12/11/2021)

On the other hand, according to one respondent,

> *"The environment that children get in pre-school is never possible*
>
> *at home. Since parents are not teachers, it becomes a little difficult*
>
> *for them to prepare the child properly."* (IDI#6, 29/10/2021)

Another participant expressed that providing gifts to child as a reward for good performance would be a good technique of teaching. (FGD#12/11/2021)

While another respondent commented,

> *"The first school for children is the parents or family. In general,*
>
> *children get basic knowledge from family. Therefore, it is necessary*
>
> *to teach the children with patience so that they stay in the practice.*
>
> *It is the job of the parent to remove the fear and encourage them*
>
> *about school."* (IDI#5, 29/10/2021)

Few of the participants mentioned that norms, culture, tradition should also be taught firstly from the family.

Views about importance of School Readiness for later academic success

All participants had the same positive opinion that School Readiness is the most important part for later academic success. Most of the participants agreed that School Readiness is the foundation of future education. Some respondents described that the

solid foundation children get, the easier it will be to get on top of their respective target. If there is a deficiency in the foundation then it becomes hard to get desired target in later period.

In this regard, one of their responses is given below

> "*Of course, preparation is very important. We all know that, morning shows the day. When your child has a good start, he will be able to face any difficulties or problem anytime and anywhere. He must be prepared in such a way so that he does not get stuck anywhere.*" (IDI#4, 22/10/2021)

One respondent mentioned that values should be taught in this age. Another said that even if the study pressure is given a little less, the child must be taught discipline. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Theme 2: Parents' perception about school readiness during COVID 19

Below sub-section states the impact of COVID 19 on school readiness and parents' role in supporting children's School Readiness.

Impact of COVID 19 on School Readiness

All of the participants had same opinion that COVID 19 has had a profound effect on their children's school readiness. Some respondents informed that all their plans for preschool have been ruined because of COVID 19. Almost all the respondents agreed that every parent has some plan to enroll their child in a school from the age of 2 of their

children. Due to COVID 19, parents were unable to implement their pre-plan, so they had to make an alternative plan.

The majority of the parents expressed that child are being deprived of the normal environment of school which will have a huge impact on the future academic life of their children. So, all parents are worried about their child's future. In this regard, one of their responses is given below.

> *"My kid is almost 2 years behind because of COVID 19. We could not prepare him properly and failed to use the most precious time of his life. I will never be able to create a school environment for a child at home. In school he could interact with other children, learn by sharing and watching. Moreover, it would increase their adaptability with new and formal learning environment. My baby didn't get any of this."* (IDI#1, 21/10/2021)

Some participants viewed that the whole world became stand still because of COVID 19, so it was less important to think more about School Readiness. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Parent's role in supporting children's School Readiness during COVID 19

The majority of the participants believe that mental support was the first requirement for children during this pandemic. According to them, we are mature to understand the situation, but children do not have the ability to understand this situation. So, they are badly affected by the situation.

Mentioning the positive aspects of COVID 19, few participants stated that parents got a long free time in the lock down period which created opportunity to come closer to their kid and teach. One of them mentioned that the education that children get from their parents is the most effective and long lasting. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Emphasizing on discipline, mother Z said,

> *"Lock down immobilizes everything, there is no work, no education, but life can't be out of rules. Of course, children have to be kept within a rule in any situation and parents also need to follow the rules so that the child is inspired by seeing them."*
> (IDI#2, 21/10/2021)

One of the participants revealed that during COVID 19, parents had to think like a child and act like a child in order to properly manage the kids. In addition, another mother added, "We also had to entertain the kids so that they could not feel bored." (FGD#12/11/2021)

One father informed that he was so worried about everything during the pandemic that he could not play his role in the child's school readiness but her mother did what she had to do. (IDI#4, 22/10/2021)

Theme 3: Parents practices of School Readiness during COVID-19 Pandemic

This section summarizes the data related to the study's second research question: parents' school readiness practices in the COVID19 circumstance.

Planning and preparing for School Readiness

Most of the respondents had some plans for their children's school readiness. Some of them wanted to send their child to preschool. It didn't happen because of COVID 19. However, 2 participants had no idea about preschool. And the rest of the parents tried to develop their children's school readiness at home. Regarding the preparation, mother Y said,

> *"I did all sorts of research on a preschool, talked to them and almost finalized everything, but all was dropped because of pandemic."* (IDI#1, 21/10/2021)

Another one mother was very excited about the shopping that was done for the preschool kid. She stated,

> *"I bought matching school bags and tiffin boxes of the child's favorite color, and also bought rhyme books, different colored pencils, etc. to give to the child in preschool. But COVID came and ruined everything. Now my kid used to play with these, put all in her school bags and gives me a bye bye, as if she was going to school. Ha ha ha."* (IDI#3, 22/10/2021)

Conversation with children regarding school

All of the participants mentioned that they talked to their children about school. One of them said that his child is very excited about school, so he had to talk about school almost all the time. Regarding sharing own school experience, one of the respondents said,

> *"Actually, sharing own school experience with child is a very exciting thing. It has never occurred to me before. From now on, I will share my experiences with my child Inshallah, thank you for this question."*
> (IDI#4, 22/10/2021)

Everyone else shared their childhood experiences of school with their children. According to them, children are inspired by this. (FGD#12/11/2021)

But all parents had to face a common question from their children. That is, "When will I go to school?"

Activities on school readiness during COVID 19

➢ **About child's activities**

Kids spent most of the time with electronic devices during the lockdown, a group of parents replied. One of them said,

> *"Now a days, kids are allured by gadgets. Moreover, when everything is off, they can't go out, they don't meet friends, they don't have chance to play, then the reliance on gadgets increases.*

> *And parents don't have anything to say at that time, rather had to*
>
> *think what else can be done!"* (IDI#2, 21/10/2021)

Most of the respondents said that their children preferred to draw. Others have added rhyme, watching TV, playing games. Some participants said their children used to play with their siblings during pandemic. The noticeable thing is that most of the parents mentioned that children spent most of their time with their mother.

Mother Z stated that her daughter helped her with household chores. Another mother said,

> *"During the lockdown, my son tried to do a lot of creative work.*
> *For example, cutting a bottle, making a tree tub, trying to draw*
> *when he saw something new, even the cartoon he was watching*
> *might be trying to draw the picture of the cartoon characters.*
> *Genetically or by observing, my son got it from me."*
> (IDI#1, 21/10/2021)

➢ About parent's activities

Most of the participants confirmed that they try to have a good time with their children. They all played with the kids, told stories, told rhymes, and introduced the alphabet and numbers, and so on. One of the participants, a mother had plenty of time during COVID 19, she explained:

"During COVID 19 we had a lot of time. None of us were in a hurry; there was no urge to work. We spent a lot of time teaching the child. I used to teach my boy alphabet one by one and make different word with it, which might take a day for a single letter. And my son learned with great enjoyment." (IDI#3, 22 /10/2021)

Few participants basically fathers revealed that they used to exercise by playing at home, keeping in mind the physical condition of themselves and their children. For example, running, playing football, and other exercise, since going out was completely off. While another respondent commented that she used to involve the child in housework to get rid of the monotony. (FGD#12/11/2021)

Almost everyone has provided different materials to the children. These include block, shape, play doe, etc. One of the participants expressed,

"I bought blocks for my daughter. She used to make different things with them and show me and ask me how it was. I was really surprised to see her creativity Mashallah." (IDI#4, 22/10/2021)

 Few respondents reflected that their children preferred to play with other things made of clay. Almost all the parents were active in different ways with the child.

Parent's satisfaction in providing sufficient time to children:

The majority of the parents expressed that they are satisfied in providing sufficient time to their children. Rest of them, by accepting their inability said due to pandemic situation they could not provide their 100%. Being a job holder, mother Y was more satisfied that she got some time for her children.

Theme 4: Challenges faced by parents

This chapter summarized the challenges parents experienced related to children School Readiness in the COVID19 crisis.

Parents' mental stress in dealing with children during COVID 19

Some respondent felt uncomfortable to inform that they had financial problems during COVID 19. That is why they could not meet the needs of the children properly. That's why they feel mental stress. While others did not have financial problems, they were concerned about COVID 19 situation and the future of the family and children.

In this regard, one of their responses was,

> *"I never reveal my problems to my family or children, COVID 19's time is no exception, I try to enjoy the time according to their needs."* (FGD#12/11/2021)

Referring to social distancing, father Y opined,

> *"Social distance had to be maintained during lockdown. Kids had to stay in a confinement with only their parents. They were*

constantly begging to go out. Not being able to provide a

healthy, normal environment and an open space for play, this

created pressure in me during the pandemic." (IDI#6,

29/10/2021)

Actions taken by parents to eradicate the gap created by COVID 19 situation

All respondents answered that they had taken different steps to eradicate the gap caused by COVID 19 situation. One of the participants expressed,

> *"I tried to attend all the work with my child. I tried to teach*
>
> *everything through play. For example, recognizing colors and*
>
> *objects making shapes etc. so that he does not feel pressure in any*
>
> *way, he can enjoy learning."* (IDI#1, 15/10/2021)

To eradicate the social gap created by COVID 19, few respondents used video calling, in order to be connected with relatives and near and dear ones and also did not forget them during the long lock down and also be attached to them. In addition, it could also help children developing their communication skill.

One of the participants shared that she used to teach handwriting to her children every day. (FGD#12/11/2021)

While another respondent commented that since he did not have the opportunity to provide pre-schooling, he tried to teach basic knowledge at home following the advice of experienced parents. (IDI#5, 29/10/2021)

The rest of the respondents could not talk about any specific action in this regard.

Supports from other family members

All participants reported that they got sufficient support from their family members. One participant said, "Family bonding became more effective during Covid19, playing with children became a good source of time passing." (FGD#12/11/2021)

The main purpose of this study was to find out the parents' perception and practices about school readiness of 4-5 years old children in COVID 19 situation. And from all the above finding it is fairly understood.

To sum up the findings, everyone who took part put forth their best effort to prepare their 4-5 years old children for school even though they do not have a clear idea about school readiness.

Discussion

In the COVID-19 scenario, the researcher looked at parents' perceptions of school readiness of children aged 4-5 years based on their understanding, practices, and challenges. The analysis of the data that came up during the study and provided an analysis of the research evidence in relation to the available literature, is showed in the chapter. The findings are divided in to four themes in this section.

Theme 1: Parents understanding about school readiness

According to the demographic profiles of the parents, all of them were well educated and economically sound. They were concerned about their children's education. The findings of the study suggested that, all of them were familiar with the term School Readiness though their idea was not appropriate. In addition, parents' understanding about how they define School Readiness was differentiated though most of the participants responded that school readiness is basic preparedness of children before going to school. Correspondingly, according to Kid Sense (2020), the term "school readiness" refers to a child's preparedness to make an efficient and easy transition to school.

One of participants stated that School Readiness refers to preparation for admission test according to the previous questions pattern and also advice from the experienced parents which are not found in any study.

Moreover, study finding presented that in School Readiness some participants emphasized on basic knowledge such as holding a pen, recognizing the alphabet, numbers, primary colors and ability to make basic communication with others before enrolling to school. This study is in compliance with the research by Ring, et.al, (2016) that children's abilities to recognize colors and forms, their own name, and letters and numbers were ranked higher by early childhood educators than by primary school educators. They also valued problem-solving abilities more than their primary school counterparts.

It was also found that most of the participants did not have idea about the age of preschool. It is evident from the study finding that the level of understanding of fathers was significantly higher than mothers.

It was clear from the findings of the study that from the perspective of parents' perception, children school readiness is really important. It is the basic knowledge which makes the foundation of the children's life, the more effective school readiness support they provide, the easier and solider shape of life they will get. In addition, it paves the way of later success in educational and working life also. Similarly, according to Petersen (2012), nurturing and safeguarding the developing brain so that it can build a strong physical foundation for lifelong learning is what school preparation entails. The brain is a complex organ that can be interested, pays attention, recalls previous experiences, gathers information, solves problems, and perseveres in the face of adversity. To put it another way, this brain has the necessary foundation for lifelong learning.

The researcher identified participants of the study emphases on qualitative and active involvement of parents in school readiness. They believed that parents play the most vital role and build bridges between school and the child. In addition, the first school for children is the parents. In general, family is the basic knowledge provider of a child. The research from Simons, et al., (2021) stated a similar view that parents are their children's first teachers; therefore, it's crucial that they know what children need to succeed in school.

In addition, few of parents opined that child needs to be taught through play and parents need to be more passionate while teaching. On the contrary, it is also found from one

participant of the study that the pre-schooling program is more effective than the parents as they are not experienced like professional teachers.

Theme 2: Parents' perception about school readiness during COVID 19

From the finding of the study, it is clearly understood that like other areas of life children's school readiness has also badly affected by COVID 19. All the planning of parents regarding children's pre-schooling became ruined because of COVID 19. Similarly, according to recent study done by Mary Renck Jalongo, 2021, the world health pandemic COVID-19 has much more consequences for the care and education of young children in both homes and schools.

They mentioned that their children are deprived of formal school environment and they will be sufferer in later academic life because of serious impact of COVID 19. So, all parents are worried about their child's future. One of the reports by UNESCO (2020) revealed that, school closures have substantial social and economic effects for individuals in all areas. Children from the most underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds, as well as their families, are significantly affected. As a result of the interruptions, previously existing inequities in the education system, as well as other aspects of their lives, were even more pronounced.

The data findings of the study suggested that during pandemic, mental support to the children was parent's first priority. According to Singh et.al. 2020, children's access to mental health support services must be improved in order to provide strategies for

developing good coping mechanisms during the current crisis. Parents should provide mental support to their children.

The hypotheses of the researcher was that all participants would recognize the negative impact of COVID 19 which was similarly found in the different studies by Hyunshik et al. (2021), Vasileva et al. (2021), Siachpazidou et al. (2021).Whereas interestingly few participants mentioned some positive opportunities created by COVID 19. They mentioned that lockdown created opportunities to the parents, especially the working mothers to come closure to their children.

From the interview it appeared that parents had to act like child in order to manage them properly and keep them cheerful during this critical situation. They also mentioned that lessons learned from parents are most effective and long lasting. According to researchers in England who conducted a survey in which they polled and questioned academic professionals and analyzed recently published worldwide studies on parental participation and children's academic attainment. The most effective strategies for parents to help their children are to read to them, listen to them read, help them learn letters, numbers, songs, and nursery rhymes, engage constructively with them, and model parental literacy. School performance improves as students grow older (Axford, et.al. 2019).

Theme 3: Parents practices of School Readiness during COVID-19 Pandemic

The data findings suggested that though in COVID 19 situation parents were unable to provide preschool facilities but they tried their best to make children interested and familiar to school. According to a UNICEF research brief released in 2020, COVID-19's closure of childcare and early education facilities has resulted in at least 40 million children globally missing out on early childhood education during their crucial pre-school year. In this respect they talked about school and also shared their own school experiences with children.

It is evident from the study findings that during COVID-19 most of the children pass their time with gadget. With more than 130 countries restricting mobility to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, it's time to acknowledge the internet as a key instrument for children's study, play, entertainment, and social connection. In summary, individuals may have a lot to gain by spending time digitally (UNICEF, 2020). Parents answered that due to closure of other activities like playing with peers, outing with parents, visiting relatives and closure of school, parents had a few choices other than using gadget.

The study findings showed that parents tried different technics to pass good time with their children. Most of the respondents said that their children preferred to draw. Others have added reciting rhymes, watching TV, playing games and those who have siblings have spent time playing with them.

It is found that, most of the participants tried to have a good time with their children doing different activities. They all played with the kids, told stories, told rhymes, and introduced the alphabet and numbers, and so on. Findings from the study also demonstrate that parents tried to provide best available learning materials such as Block, shape, pay doe, clay, color pencil, etc. to ensure the proper development of their children. In addition, mothers tried to involve children in household works like cooking, cleaning, organizing on the other hand, most of the fathers did physical exercise with their children in order to maintain good health like running, playing football, and other exercises. A study in Melbourne revealed that although usual preschool routines have been interrupted due to COVID 19, parents help their children's school readiness through arranging different activities. Like, playing in the sandpit, playing with water, dress ups, singing songs, dancing, climbing trees, drawing, and painting, pasting and playing with blocks, play dough, dolls and cubbies. Puzzles or games such as UNO, Memory, age-appropriate board games and charades; Sing songs and rhymes and read lots and lots and lots of stories etc. (Dorrat, 2020).

Researcher found that most of the children pass their majority time with their mothers. The researcher identified that though fathers had more knowledge on School Readiness than mothers but they were not active in this process as much as mothers.

It was also found that majority of the participant was satisfied that they provided sufficient time to their kids.

Theme 4: Challenges faced by parents

Researcher found that during COVID-19 most of the parents had to face financial crisis, which lead to other problems also. For which they were unable to satisfy all their needs. It is found from a study that the temporary lockdown in Bangladesh as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak increased economic burdens and produced socio-economic insecurity among the population (DOZA, et al. 2020).

Due to lockdown they had to be confined in a small area, which led to unrest and mental pressure to the parents. This is why it was not possible to provide proper child care.

The researcher identified that social distancing created a huge problem to handle children. In this regard, they tried to teach the children through play so that they can enjoy it. According to a recent study done by Toran et. al. (2021), during the COVID-19 quarantine, Turkish and Chinese families had comparable experiences with their 3–6 years old children. They made an effort to design engaging activities that would encourage efficient communication between themselves and their children.

To minimize the social gap, some participants, used social media and video calling with relatives and dear and near ones.

They also mentioned that they got full support from their family during the challenging period of COVID-19. In research from Cusinato et al. (2020), measures of confinement and changes in daily routine have a negative impact on parents' psychological dimensions, putting children at danger. But they tried to overcome the problem together.

From the above discussion, it is clear that each parent used a variety of strategies to improve their children's school preparation. Parents believe that COVID-19 causes many issues and family incompetence, which affects children's school preparation, which is comparable to that of children in other countries.

Conclusion

The study shows the overall parent's knowledge and action regarding school readiness. At the same time at also reflect the social and education system of the country.

According to the study, most of the parents beyond questioning accept the importance of School Readiness. In the pandemic the regular education system was interrupted. The few pre-schoolings facility we had was closed due to lock-down. So, the parents who planned for pre-schooling program, had to plan for a new one. They had tried to their level best to provide the maximum opportunities for their children though majority of them do not have proper knowledge on this topic.

The participants of the study all are educated and economically sound whereas we found that some participants are far behind the normal standard. So, it is a great concern that what is the situation of the others.

In addition, due to socio-economic condition of the country, mother had to play the vital role in child rearing. In the pandemic, dependency on mother for school readiness was become more then other time, though most of them are not clear about it. Knowledge

sharing tendency among the parents was not practiced, which might have been effective in decreasing the knowledge gap.

The most common response from them participant was that they all were very worried about their children's future education and development. According to the study a few parents were able to provide the maximum support on school readiness. Whereas, it was not possible for the parents to arrange the school environment and teach children like a professional teacher. Moreover, the community, society and the other family affair was stopped, so the socialization of the children could not be properly done.

In this situation, we need to provide counseling support to the parents as well as for the children. To cover the maximum part of the country, government may broadcast special program on national TV and radio. In addition, to reduce the loss and damage from any such emergency condition government should have to develop policy regarding school readiness.

Recommendations

Evidence from the reflections on the findings and discussion of the present study on parents' perceptions regarding school readiness during COVID-19, the study has come up with few recommendations which are as follows:

- Due to socio-economic condition, mothers are more involved in child rearing as well as School Readiness. Study shown that fathers are more knowledgeable than mothers about School readiness, but they were not actively involved in it. In this

respect, parents need to share their School Readiness knowledge among themselves and father need to be more active in this aspect.

- Parents who fail to provide proper school readiness to their children, need to join seminar, short courses on recovering the children's school readiness.

- After a long break, children are returning to school again, this break has disrupted their routine life and caused mental pressure. Counselling for students to cope with the school environment is needed.

- During COVID19 pandemic parents were confused about what to do, and how to do about School Readiness of their children. To provide them proper guideline in such pandemic situation, School Readiness should be included in the Disaster Management policy.

- Most of the parents in the country, especially in the rural area are not aware of School Readiness. In order to cover maximum parents, program on School Readiness should be telecast serially on the national TV channels.

- Pre-school programs should be available within affordable cost. That should be enriched with modern learning facility especially, online learning.

- In Bangladesh there are a few studies in this field. To find the more relevant information for taking appropriate decision more study is needed.

- Community, society, policy maker and Government all need to be more aware about School Readiness.

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Annex-1
(In-Depth Interview)

Research Topic: School Readiness During COVID19—

Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children

Research objectives:

1. To explore how parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation
2. To know about the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situations

Research Questions:

1. How do parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation?
2. What are the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situation?

Demographic Information:

Parent's name	:	
Gender	:	
Age	:	
Educational qualification	:	
Occupation	:	
Child's name:	:	
Child's age:	:	
Total number of children	:	
Interview date:	:	
Interview starting time:	:	
Interview ending time:	:	

Parents understanding towards school readiness in COVID 19 situation

1. Are you familiar with the term "School Readiness"? What do you know about this?

2. What is the importance of school readiness and how does parent's involvement impact on child's school readiness process?

3. What is the impact of COVID-19 on your child's School Readiness?

4. What kind of supports children need in this situation?

5. What parents need to do towards school readiness of their children in pandemic / lockdown?

6. Do you think School Readiness is important for later academic success? Why?

Parents' practices with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situation:

1. Did you have any plan for your child's School Readiness?

2. How did you prepare for your child's School Readiness?

3. Did any of your children ever go to preschool? If yes, then how did you prepare him/her?

4. Do you have conversation with your child regarding school?

5. Did you share your childhood experience regarding school readiness?

6. How did your child spend his or her time during lockdown?

7. With whom did your child spend most of the time during lockdown?

8. What types of activities did you do with your child during this pandemic? Such as: storytelling, rhymes, drawing, coloring, play, alphabet and number recognition, etc.

9. Did you provide your child hands on activity materials such as blocks, shapes, puzzles, play dough, etc.?

10. Did you feel any mental stress to deal with your child during COVID 19 situation?

11. Have you taken any action to eradicate the gap created due to COVID 19 situation?

12. Did you get supports of other family members regarding this?

13. Are you satisfied that you have provided sufficient time to your child?

14. Any suggestion or any other comments?

প্রশ্নমালাঃ

<u>COVID 19 পরিস্থিতিতে স্কুলের প্রস্তুতি সম্পর্কে অভিভাবকদের ধারনা:</u>

১.   আপনি কি "স্কুল প্রস্তুতি" শব্দটির সাথে পরিচিত? আপনি এই সম্পর্কে কি জানেন?

২.   স্কুলের প্রস্তুতির গুরুত্ব কী এবং অভিভাবকের অংশগ্রহণ কীভাবে শিশুর স্কুলের প্রস্তুতি প্রক্রিয়ায় প্রভাব ফেলে?

৩.   আপনার সন্তানের স্কুল প্রস্তুতিতে COVID 19 এর প্রভাব কী?

৪.   এই অবস্থায় শিশুদের কোন ধরনের সহায়তা প্রয়োজন?

৫.   মহামারী / লকডাউনে তাদের সন্তানদের স্কুলের প্রস্তুতির জন্য অভিভাবকদের কী করা দরকার?

৬.   আপনি কি মনে করেন পরবর্তী শিক্ষাগত সাফল্যের জন্য স্কুল প্রস্তুতি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ? কেন?

COVID 19 পরিস্থিতিতে স্কুলের প্রস্তুতির জন্য পিতামাতার সন্তানদের সাথে অনুশীলন :

১.   আপনার সন্তানের স্কুল প্রস্তুতির জন্য কোন পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছিলেন কি?

২.   আপনি আপনার সন্তানের স্কুল প্রস্তুতির জন্য কিভাবে প্রস্তুতি নিয়েছিলেন?

৩.   আপনার সন্তানদের কেউ কি কখনো প্রিস্কুলে গিয়েছিল? যদি হ্যাঁ, তাহলে আপনি তাকে কিভাবে প্রস্তুত করেছেন?

৪.   আপনি কি আপনার সন্তানের সাথে স্কুল সম্পর্কিত কথোপকথন করেন?

৫.   আপনি কি স্কুলের প্রস্তুতি সম্পর্কে আপনার শৈশবের অভিজ্ঞতা শেয়ার করেছেন?

৬.   লকডাউনের সময় আপনার সন্তান কিভাবে তার সময় কাটিয়েছে?

৭.   লকডাউনের সময় আপনার সন্তান কার সাথে বেশিরভাগ সময় কাটিয়েছে?

৮.   এই মহামারীর সময় আপনি আপনার সন্তানের সাথে কোন ধরনের ক্রিয়াকলাপ করেছেন কি? যেমন: গল্প বলা, ছড়া, অঙ্কন, রং করা, খেলা, বর্ণমালা এবং সংখ্যা পরিচিতি ইত্যাদি।

৯.   আপনি কি আপনার সন্তানকে কার্যকলাপের সামগ্রী যেমন ব্লক, আকার, ধাঁধা, প্লে-ডো ইত্যাদি দিয়েছিলেন?

১০.   COVID 19 পরিস্থিতির সময় আপনার সন্তানের পরিচর্যায় আপনি কি কোন মানসিক চাপ অনুভব করেছেন?

১১.   COVID 19 পরিস্থিতির কারণে সৃষ্ট ব্যবধান দূর করার জন্য আপনি কি কোনো পদক্ষেপ নিয়েছিলেন?

১২.   আপনি কি এই বিষয়ে পরিবারের অন্যান্য সদস্যদের সমর্থন পেয়ে ছিলেন?

১৩.   আপনি কি সন্তুষ্ট যে, আপনি আপনার সন্তানকে পর্যাপ্ত সময় দিয়েছেন?

১৪.   কোন পরামর্শ বা অন্য কোন মন্তব্য?

Annex-2

(Focus Group Discussion)

Research Topic: School Readiness During COVID 19—

Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children

Research objectives:

1. To explore how parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation
2. To know about the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situations

Research Questions:

1. How do parents perceive school readiness in COVID 19 situation?
2. What are the practices by parents with their children for school readiness in COVID 19 situation?

Demographic Information:

Parent's name	:	
Gender	:	
Age	:	
Educational qualification	:	
Occupation	:	
Child's name:	:	
Child's age:	:	
Total number of children	:	
Interview date:	:	
Interview starting time:	:	
Interview ending time:	:	

Questions

1. What do you understand about school readiness?

2. When can we consider a child is ready to go to a pre-school?

3. What do you think about the importance of children's school readiness?

4. What is the role of parents in a child's school readiness process?

5. How does your child spend time in this COVID 19 situation at home?

6. What did you do for your child to develop their pre-schooling skills?

7. How can parents support the children in reducing the gap created due to COVID 19 situation?

প্রশ্নমালাঃ

১. স্কুলের প্রস্তুতি সম্পর্কে আপনি কি বুঝেন?

২. আমরা কখন বিবেচনা করতে পারি যে একটি শিশু প্রি-স্কুলে যাওয়ার জন্য প্রস্তুত?

৩. শিশুদের স্কুলের প্রস্তুতির গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে আপনি কি মনে করেন?

৪. শিশুর স্কুলের প্রস্তুতি প্রক্রিয়ায় পিতামাতার ভূমিকা কী?আপনার সন্তান কীভাবে এই ঈঙঠওউ ১৯ পরিস্থিতিতে বাড়িতে সময় কাটায়?

৫. আপনার সন্তানের প্রাক-বিদ্যালয় দক্ষতা বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কী করেছিলেন?

৬. COVID 19 পরিস্থিতির কারণে সৃষ্ট ব্যবধান কমাতে বাবা -মায়েরা কীভাবে শিশুদের সহায়তা করতে পারেন?

Annex-3

Consent Form for the Participants

Title of the Research: School Readiness During COVID19—

Perception and Practices of Parents Having 4-5 Years Old Children

Researcher: Sohani Jahan Aurthy

Purpose of the research

I am conducting this research as a part of my Master's Degree requirement from the BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. The research will focus on parents' perceptions and practices regarding school readiness for their 4-5 years old children during the COVID-19 situation.

Risks and benefits

There is no risk to you for participating in this study; directly or indirectly parents, children, policymakers may be benefited in the future if any national policy or intervention program incorporates your perception and practices about pre-school aged children's school readiness.

Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. I would be happy to answer any of your queries about the study and you are welcome to contact me.

Future use of information

Some of the information collected from this study may be kept for future use. However, in such cases information and data supplied to other researchers will not conflict with or

violate the maintenance of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of information identifying participants in any way.

Right not to participate and withdraw

Your participation is totally voluntary. and you may change your mind and withdraw at any time before and during the study. If you are willing to participate in this research or disclose information about yourself, I would request you to sign this consent form.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   **Signature of Participant**

Date: Date: