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Navigating through Covid19- Mothers' Leadership As Catalyst For Sustainable Development Of the Youth Of Pakistan

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Abstract

Sustainable development and its significance to our future generations is not new to anyone. However, the bay between the knowledge and implementation is yet to be bridged.Covid-19 and its aftermaths are leaving their visible marks on almost all spheres of economy, consequently, the restrictive measures put by the government led to abrupt school closures and absence of social life and called for additional contribution of parents. WHO, UNDP and other global bodies' reports on the aftermaths of pandemic highlighting the need to meet the emotional and psychological needs of the young children. The situation has intensified the parents' role in general and mothers in particular, we hypothesize that mothers if use their emotional intelligence can help developing a sustainable youth. The sensitivity and the relative importance led us to use a mixed research design as endorsed by Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), Greene (2007) and Dorneyi, (2007) who call it "multiple ways of seeing and hearing" (p. 20). This mixed design helped in unearthing the deep-set concepts in the minds of research subjects. Results showed a significant relationship between mother's EI, and child cognitive development in the form of better interpersonal behaviour and better academic results. Mothers with high EI reported a better relationship with the respective children. In conclusion, these findings support the notion that a mother's EI could have a significant impact on a child's cognitive development ultimately leading to a need for future research focusing on Mothers' EI as a tool for the sustainable development of the youth of Pakistan.

Keywords: Emotional and Psychological Needs, Sustainable Development.

تلخیص

مستحکم ترقی اور نوجوانوں کے لیے اس کی اہمیت کوئی نئی بات نہیں تاہم علم اور نفاذ کے درمیان ایک خلیج حائل ہے جسے پاٹنا ابھی بھی باقی ہے۔ Covid-19اور اس کے اثرات معیشت کے تقریباً تمام شعبوں پر نمایاں طور پر اثر انداز ہوئے ہیں ، نتیجتاً حکومت کی طرف سے لگائی گئی پابندیاں جیسے کہ تدریس کی اچانک بندش ، اور سماجی زندگی کی عدم موجودگی والدین کے لیے اضافی ذمہ داریاں لے کر آئے ہیں۔ ڈبلیو۔ ایچ۔ او ، یو۔ این ۔او۔ اور دیگر عالمی اداروں نے اپنی رپورٹس میں نوجوانوں کی ذہنی ، جذباتی اور نفسیاتی ضروریات کو پورا کرنے کے لیے والدین کے کردار کو کلیدی قرار دیا ہے۔ اس ضمن میں ہم یہ قیاس کرتے ہیں کہ مائیں اگر اپنی جذباتی

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ذہانت(EI) کا مؤثر استعمال کریں تو وہایک قوم کے مستحکم مستقبل کی نشونما میں مثبت کردار کرسکتی ہیں ۔اس کی حساسیت اور متعلقہ اہمیت نے ہمیں مخلوط تحقیقی ڈیزائن منتخب کرنے پر مجبور کیا جیسا کہ پچھلے محققین نے اس کی تائید کی ہے(محترم تشاکری، ٹیڈی ۱۹۹۸، گرین ۲۰۰۷، ٹوریے۲۰۰۷)۔ مخلوط تحقیقی ڈیزائن نے تحقیق ہونے والے ماؤں اور بچوں کے ذہنوں میں جو مبہم اندیشے تھے ان کو بھی منظر عام پر لانے میں کافی اہم کردار ادا کیا ہے۔ہمارے نتائج نے نمایاں طور پر ماؤں کی جذباتی ذہانت اور نوجوانوں مستحکم ترقی میں ایک اہم تعلق ظاہر کیا ۔ زیادہ جذباتی ذہانت والی ماؤں کا بچوں کے ساتھ مضبوط اور بہتر تعلق نظر آیا لہٰذا ہمارے قیاس کے مطابق ماؤن کی جذباتی ذہانت اور بچوں کی تعلیمی اور سماجی ترقی کے درمیان ایک گہرا اور مثبت تعلق ہے ۔ ہماری تحقیق کے نتائج اس کی تائید کرتے ہیں نیز اسی ضمن میں مزید تحقیق کی ضرورت کو اجاگر کرتے ہیں۔

کلیدی الفاظ: جذباتی ذہانت، مستحکم ترقی، جذباتی اور نفسیاتی ضروریات

Introduction

Against the backdrop of the present pandemic there are almost 200 countries and more than two million people infected. The outbreak of Covid-19 has had a huge and unimaginable impact upon the lives and progress of millions of young children across the nations (Chinazzi et al., 2020).The disruption is undoubtedly swifter and more immediate than either the SARS outbreak of 2003 or the global financial crisis of 2007–08! Pakistan however presents an even a bleak picture. The whole nation in general and young children in particular seem as if they are in 'black Hole', upset and stressed, deprived of their school life, friendship, recreational activities and other socialization. The stakeholders' efforts aren't reaping good result sowing to its low adaptability degree to modern parenting modes and new technology-based education system. All this requires an intelligent direction and skilful execution of Parenting Paradigm and Mothers' Emotional Intelligence (EI from now) may serve as a catalyst in achieving the objectives of sustainable development of our youth (Estrada 2021, Fernendez 2020, Aminabadi 2012).

In times when our society is going through a moral decline and a host of economic challenges, the outbreak of pandemic has worsened the condition to a greater extent. Drawing a number of inferences about the far-reaching impact, few of them are visible and successful yet more of them we have to observe and witness in future. Just like all the ones on lead parents are also feeling their shoulders heavy and going through an unparallel pandemic as to how to deal with the sky-rocketing parenting issues. The lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic compelled work community to sit home and work. Further setbacks were income reduction/ loss, infected or deceased family members that increased the vulnerability for children. Mothers are constantly on a roller-coaster bringing more daunting challenges to them, they have been visibly involved with intensified workloads connected with their children well-being.

Marching ahead to manage turbulence, economies across the globe are showing up with more intensified and integrated approach. Child care and well-being as part of a sustainable future is supported by a host of platforms, including global conventions, treaties, and other legal support systems. With this common purpose, the need for a system that meets the emotional, psychological and intellectual needs of our children has intensified the role of all those who are in direct contact with the young children and for this all the stakeholders specially parents and mothers in particular are expected to tap the opportunity to bring novelty to the old-fashioned parenting styles to facilitate and guide young children. Concludingly, economic and social setbacks of Covid-19 seem to have no end! This calls for the immediate wake-up call of the intellects around the globe.

The youth trajectory of Pakistan presents a daunting challenge! The onset of Covid has further worsened the situation. Lack of focus, low-morale youth and non-promising academic progress are showing up as undesirable statistics upon the nation's trajectory. Perhaps there is a dire need to look into the situation, investigate the donors and unearth the root causes. The usage of mobile phones is shooting up leaving its visible marks on the ethical and moral values of society in general, the unacceptable academic outcome is another tangible and visible factor that support our exploration.

Family as a Support Centre: Family is like an incubation center to the young kids where they learn how to communicate and network with others in school and then in society. family- as the first social unit becomes vital in training these young buds to acquire strength, empower themselves, and become a team member and contributes as a better donor to society. Family is as the central element of our social set-up and a part of society inevitably influences the economy at large showing it as a significant constituent to the sustainability of any economy. A recent UNDP report (2018) highlights the possible role of families and the role they can play towards the achievement of sustainability development goals -SDGs, It was also stated that "the very achievement of development goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals". Former UN Secretary General. The conducive working environment at home is instrumental to meet the two paramount concerns of fulfilling the emotional and psychological needs of our children and keeping our community safe.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is changing family life. It has brought serious implications in the form of physical, mental health issues, distressed children at home. The challenges further becoming exacerbated due to the reduced income and emotional setbacks owing to infection and deaths in immediate and extended families. Deprivation and shocks being received today most likely persist into their adulthood thereby passing the same to future generation! On the other hand, investing in children's rights to parents, especially mother's care will increase social cohesion, lead to positive growth and eventually would be passed on to generations next. The bottom line is that quality care of mothers positively contributes to the overall well-being of children and provides the very foundation for

sustained development today and tomorrow. The effective role played by mothers using their emotional intelligence smartly may prove to be a catalyst achieving the above said goal.

The challenges are challenging the capacity of parents specifically while handling the emotional and disturbed personalities of their children. However, all this has presented not only the audacities on the part of the whole nation and parents' part but also offers many opportunities to reshape the family life with strong ties. Mothers are with additional challenges of handling the children in isolation, giving due care to stressed out kids and meeting their emotional and psychological needs. Realizing that COVID-19 is not the first virus to threaten humanity, and it will not be the last. What we need to think and act rationally and save our future. The present study would help understanding the challenges and arriving at some appropriate and suitable solutions.

Review of Literature

Family though small but is the fundamental unit of all modern societies. Children learn to connect, empathize, resolve conflict and conciliate within these small, vital social structure UNICEF Report (2018) on Families Role in SDG. We found a strong backing of the contemporary literature that family dynamics, child's development and a mother's background and psychological well-being of children all have a strong link (Gonzelas et al., (2021), Yeng et al., (2020), Ewing et al., (2019), Cluver Meich (2018), Kirigin et al., (2014), Aminabadi (2012), Duncombe et al. (2012), Darling (1993), The importance of the mother-child dyad cannot be overstated. These researches advocate that emotional intelligence of mother is one of the most important factors in cognitive development of child dealing with anxiety and behavior in stressful conditions (Wen et al., 2018). Emotional intelligence has been the focal point of numerous researchers reporting an extensive range of positive outcomes in the form of better adaptability of children to their environment in general and better mental health in particular (Yeng et al., 2020, Silvia 2020). With the understanding that a mother's emotional intelligence and its contribution and care to child development is multifaceted and complex, we find it appropriate to present a synopsis of the contemporary developments in the context of emotional intelligence:

Emotional Intelligence (EI):

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability of the people in a dyadic relationship to manage emotional state and feelings, discriminate between them and finally using this in one's own thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer (1990). Emotional intelligence refers to "a thinker with a heart" who shows skill in perceiving, understanding and managing social relations. The researchers have been developing and redeveloping the concept of EI successfully in numerous writings and have developed a well-recognized construct to describe EI. Following is the gist of their writings that explains EI with the help of four interrelated branches:

Perceiving emotions is forming a concrete impression about the feelings. Precisely it refers to the ability to understand, appreciate and express one's emotions. It also includes the ability to discriminate between precise and imprecise, honest or dishonest expressions. Facilitating thought using emotions is following the world' trend of integrating emotion and cognition and arriving at an appropriate point of act/ behaviour. Thinking is facilitated and governed by emotions and help focusing the attention to important information. Emotional states facilitate coping. For example, wellbeing facilitates creativity. Understanding emotions is to understand and analyse emotions, employing emotional knowledge in a logical way. Interpersonal Relationships are built on the basis of understanding the emotional signals in a dyad, which has implications for the same relationship. Sadness and excitement are such examples. Emotion management is managing emotions in life situation is the real art of emotional intelligence. It requires regulation and management to develop intellectual reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual data.

Cognitive Development

Adolescence is a stage that contributes volumes to cognitive development of children rapidly. It comprises of biological changes in the structure of brain as well as increasing connectivity thereby increasing the social demands in the form of inductive reasoning. Some very important cognitive functions enabling them to control and coordinate with the respective thoughts and behavior, this all is associated with the changes in the prefrontal cortex area of the brain. The major component of personality formation i.e. thoughts, ideas, and concepts that are likely to influence one's whole life are developed at this period of life (Stangor, Charles 2015).

The constructivist perspective, based on the work of Piaget mentions the improvements that occur during adolescence in basic thinking abilities generally in five areas of attention, memory, organization, meta cognition and formal operational thought. Attention Developments are seen in selective attention, attention span as well as divided attention (the ability to pay attention simultaneously to two or more stimuli). Memory Improvements are seen in working memory and long-term memory. Processing Speed. Thinking ability improves visibly at this stage, Adolescents think more quickly than children. Organization Improved organization skills are seen at this level where adolescents are not only known better about their weaknesses and strengths but can also develop strategies to think and remember information more efficiently. Metacognition. This level enables adolescents to monitor their progress. Meta cognition provides the ability to plan ahead, see the future consequences of an action, and provide alternative explanations of events. The last stage as worked out by Piaget is Formal Operational thought that enables the adolescents to think not only in concrete but also in a hypothetical manner. This marks a milestone in the history as it explains the development of a wider perspective and enables them to enter into problem solving and decision-making process.

Mothers' EI and Cognitive Development

Emotional intelligence is a new human faculty that proposes to have a strong impact upon child cognitive development. Research has shown that mother-child dyad and good affection positively contribute to everyday movement behaviour of children and adults and different levels of affection influence and result in high or low positive behavior (Yang et al. 2020). Mothers with a high EI coefficient are reported to show more concern to the feelings and emotion of their children, pay more attention to their children and play a positive role towards their overall well being(Ewing et al., 2019). Maternal Emotional Intelligence has been reported as a strong predictor of young children' motor development. Higher EI scores were significantly associated with higher child motor skill scores (Sonia et al. 2021). Other researchers also endorse the same reporting different dimensions in the form of applying certain participatory and supportive behaviours towards their children (Ozbaci, 2006). Facilitative emotional intelligence has been examined and confirmed as a predictor of sensitive and responsive parenting increasing parents' empathic distress tolerance that in turn develops parents support program for the child's support (Stepanie et al. 2020). Ewing et al. (2019) also support the notion that the nuanced role of parental empathy in influencing parenting behaviors and point to facilitative emotional intelligence as an additional correlate of sensitive and responsive parenting. Mothers who maintain good affection level with their wards are commanded to play a central role in controlling their children when face difficult situation i.e. depression, disorder and anxiety (Yang 2020). Another research augments knowledge about the important variables of child and caregiver that positively impact on dyadic outcomes, identifying vital imperatives to be cared during intervention. The results further suggest that a parental-based intervention supports developing the cognitive abilities of children (Silvia et al. 2020).

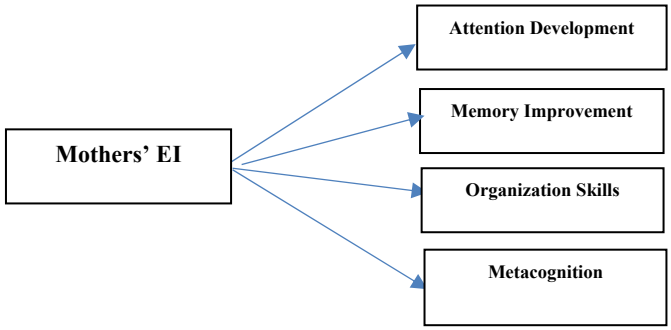
Other researches also endorse the same ties between mothers' emotional intelligence and positive behaviour. Few endorsement are also available on the positive commanding behaviours of mothers where they can even afford being authoritative, interactive, and persuasive with their child and also result in positive outcome (Aminabadi et al., 2012). Mothers with high emotional intelligence are found more dutiful, devoting more time to the psychological needs of their children (Aminabadi et al., 2012; Crandall et al., 2015). Emotional intelligence is found to be a strong predictor in estimating a child's success in inter and intrapersonal skills, dealing with critical situation and becoming a social fabric of society. Empirical evidence have been found that emotional intelligence of parents most likely to be transmitted in their children thus bringing success to their lives (Alina & Cristina 2014).

The conclusion here, these findings support the notion that a mother's EI could have a significant impact on a child's cognitive development.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There are positive empirical link amid by Mothers' emotional intelligence and cognitive development of children
Hypothesis 1_A: Mothers' emotional intelligence has significant positive impact on child's attention development.
Hypothesis 1_B :Mothers' emotional intelligence has significant positive impact on child's' memory improvement.
Hypothesis 1_C: Mothers' emotional intelligence has significant positive impact on child's organization skills.
Hypothesis 1_D :Mothers' emotional intelligence has significant positive impact on child's metacognition.

Conceptual Model



Source: Author's estimation

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Methodology

The research uses a mixed research approach as it is supported by the previous researchers. They advocate that mixed research design helps increasing the validation of the research construct. Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) reflected "qualitative and quantitative approaches in the methodology of a study" (p. ix). Other scholars call it as "multiple ways of seeing and hearing" (p. 20) Greene (2007). Dorneyi, (2007:39) is another researcher who supported the use of qualitative research design in unearthing the deep-set concepts in the minds of research subjects.

Using this mixed research design, we did: (1) a literature review focusing on identifying the mothers' challenges related to the negative impact of pandemic and (2) administered a comprehensive investigation focusing on the parents' relevant challenges and opportunities and (3) examining the impact of mothers' emotional intelligence upon effective parenting.

It comprises of interviews of five mothers, Head teachers and Coordinator (purposive sampling) and two questionnaires to check the maternal EI and cognitive progress of students using Bar-on QI and self-developed questionnaires respectively. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) was used to measure maternal EI (Bar-On, 1997). This self-report questionnaire was reduced to 15 short questions focusing on the five scales of 1. Intrapersonal skills 2) Interpersonal skills, 3) Stress management, 4) Adaptability, and 5) Total mood. This test was scored on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree with '5' and strongly disagree with '1').A self-developed questionnaire was administered in five schools and three colleges of Karachi to check the cognitive development of children. Variables of Piaget constructivism paradigm were used to assess the status of cognitive development in children, this questionnaire contained 32 items encapsulating all the parameters adequately. Prior to the administration of these two questionnaires, translated version of the instruments was prepared to Urdu and was checked by an expert psychologist. This was done to facilitate mothers who were though educated but from an Urdu background. Simple random sampling was chosen for selecting 80 mothers, whom there was everything unknown so simple random was the best method for unbiased sample that can truly represent a larger group. 80 children (56 females and 24 males), stratified random sampling was used for the children sample. Different set of students from different levels with varied academic performance were selected justifying their selection to represent a large population of all disciplines and groups.

Results & Discussion

The reliability measure was reported at an average of 0.89 thus suggesting a good fit of the predictors and variables. The data is shown below:

Table: 1

Reliability analysis of predictors and outcome variables

Name of Variable	Value of Cronbach's Alpha
Mothers' Emotional Intelligence	0.92
Attention Development	0.81
Memory Improvement	0.82
Organization Skills	0.88
Metacognition	0.87

Table 1 shows the Cronbach alpha values for the predictor i.e., 0,92 and 0.81,0.82,0,88 & 0.87 for the respective outcome variables evident the internally consistent reliability of the chosen variables. All the above stated values adequately meet the required acceptance level of the factors' reliability and add to increase the validity of the selected variables.

Table: 2
Regression showing ei and child's cognition associations

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized		
	Outcome Variable		Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
Constant	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.795 .953 .570 .676	.282 .429 .393 .355		.818 .551 .537 .533	.005 .000 .000 .000
Interpersonal skills	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.321 .410 .313 .350	.070 .107 .109 .090	.215 .307 .346 .301	.198 .853 .126 .803	.001 .000 .002 .005
Intrapersonal skills	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.120 .153 .151 .088	.070 .101 .095 .086	.299 .302 .301 .345	.714 1.517 1.584 1.025	.004 ..003 .004 .002
Stress Management	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.086 .197 .300 .301	.068 .099 .093 .084	.092 .165 .268 .292	.267 .001 .224 .586	.001 .002 .001 .000
Adaptability	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.292 .196 .236 .185	.080 .121 .111 .101	.253 .127 .169 .144	.636 .620 .128 .833	.000 .004 .001 .005
Total Mood	Attention development Memory Improvement Organization Metacognition	.398 .410 .399 .387	070 .107 .109 .090	.215 .307 .346 .301	.287 .833 .176 .803	.001 .000 .002 .005

Regression results found positive strong association of mothers' emotional intelligence with all the variables of cognitive development of children thus suggesting the notion that a mother's EI could have a significant impact on a child's cognitive development. Our results were found consistent with previous researches Esmaeelzadehazada 2021 who found a statistically significant association between Mother's EI and motor development with an effect size of 45%, thus suggesting that the mother's EI could predict motor development. This study endorses the joint positive impact of all dimensions of Mothers' EI on the child's motor development and interpersonal skills that help promoting the positive behavior in academic settings. Another study of Aminabadi 2012 who reflected that "Adolescence is considered to be a crucial stage in identity construction and a time when mental health is vulnerable" also confirms the present construct of Mothers' EI and Child's mental and general well-being. Parents' EI was found in this research as a strong predictor (a strong predictive power as quoted by the author) of positive mental health and the associated learning outcome. In conclusion, these findings support the conception that a mother's EI could have a significant impact on a child's sustainable development.

Results of Table 2 shows the strongest association that was observed with interpersonal skills and all the variables of interpersonal skills i.e. Attention development, Memory Improvement, Organization, Metacognition with highest coefficients of.321, .410, .313, .350 and t-statistics of .198, .853,.126, .803. The significance level for most of the variables was close to .001 and .000 validating the significance of the hypothesis. With a little variation, same results were found for 'total mood' of mothers for their contribution towards the cognitive development of children. The significance of the hypothesis can be checked by the sig. column which is less than .1 for all predictors. The author seems it interesting and important to share the views of at least 39 children(50% population approx.) who happened to develop this strong impression that they should not bring a stage where the mother is in bad mood and perhaps this is an easy way out to avoid trouble in their lives. This sharing help arriving at a conclusion that mothers-if use their EI effectively- have the power to mold the behavior pattern and can take the children to positive personality and career development.

However, the author would like to bring a very important point to surface and that is about getting judgmental and giving a final verdict about any such situation doesn't seem appropriate, instead due consideration must be given to the various other intervening factors i.e. social and cultural status of the mothers in the dyad relationship of mother and child and therefore such conclusions should be carefully weighed.

Conclusions

For most leaders, the past two years have challenged their skill & capacity to show creativity and adaptability more than anyone's imagination in an innovative manner. But hard times also allow for creative opportunity: to build stronger relationships with our children and adolescents. This period of an influx of never-ending daunting challenges has called for a rapid redeployment of resources while positioning and maintaining equity

as a priority. For mothers, their positioning perhaps has generated new opportunities to demonstrate their leadership talent, capitalizing on their strengths and using their EI as a catalyst to bring wellness to their children and be a change agent!

Recommendation

Future research is recommended seeing more dimensions of parenting and their powerful impact upon the growth & development of young children.

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